

STAPLERS

NEWSLETTER

www.staplers.org.uk

September 2016

Notes from the Chairman

Again we have managed to hold four very enjoyable **Garden Evenings** in our 'summer break'. Fortunately the only one with rain was held where there was a conservatory large enough to accommodate a dozen people dancing. By alternating those on the floor we all still managed to dance. So thank you Jill & Peter, Lorraine & Ced, Val & Bernard and Joan & Chris for enabling us to "keep dancing".

We return to St John's in September with our usual mix of club and guest callers and musicians – as well as a **Hallowe'en Special**.

We shall also be opening half an hour earlier on 5th September & 24th October for a *workshop session* prior to the normal club night. These sessions will concentrate on

Heys & Reels (September) and common moves often found in Contra dancing – eg turning into a wave (October).

Our AGM will be held at the beginning of October when the committee will be interested to receive your feedback on events and initiatives such as the early evening workshop sessions started in the past year. Traditionally we have a good turnout for AGMs so hope to see you there this year.

Ann Gibson

Notice of AGM

The AGM this year is on
Monday 3rd October 2016
...so come along, have your say and support your hard-working committee.

MONDAY NIGHT

| | | | |
|--------------|---|-------------|--|
| 5 September | Ann Gibson | 31 October | Hallowe'en with Lorraine Morgan |
| 12 September | Nick Plum | 7 November | Frances Oates <i>with Turnabouts</i> |
| 19 September | Cedric Morgan | 14 November | Kevin Prigmore |
| 26 September | Joan Rutt | 21 November | Barbara Gilder & Kim Brosan |
| 3 October | AGM @ 8.30pm. <i>Dancing from 8.00pm and after AGM with Bernard Higgs</i> | 28 November | Colin Hume <i>with Spring Greens</i> |
| 10 October | Adrian Besant | 5 December | Jill Bransby |
| 17 October | Barry Goodman | 12 December | <i>Come All Ye</i> |
| 24 October | Denise Devonald <i>with Staplers Musicians</i> | 19 December | Christmas Party – As usual, anything could happen! <i>Bring a plate of food or drink to share.</i> |

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Committee

Chairman: Ann Gibson

Secretary: Ces Mills

Treasurer: Kim Brosan

Editor: Cedric Morgan

Committee Members:

Denise Devonald

Ron McDowell

Lorraine Morgan

ANNIVERSARY DANCE

1st October 2016 • 7.30 – 11.00
Ray Goodswen • with **Kelly's Eye**

CHRISTMAS DANCE

3rd December 2016 • 7.30 – 11.00
Mark Elvins • with **Deo Volente**

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

EVENTS

Club Sunday Lunch • 13th March 2016

A Happy Occasion

This year's Staplers' lunch was a particularly happy occasion. Thirty-two people attended and the buzz of conversation suggested that everyone was enjoying themselves.

Once again the **Green Man** at Stanford near Biggleswade provided very tasty and well presented meals all of which were served speedily and efficiently. Of course the efficiency of the pub's staff was matched by that of Ces who clearly had put in a



lot of work arranging the event and ensuring things ran smoothly on the day and the gift that Ann presented to Ces in recognition of her work in arranging this lunch event over the years was a very nice thought and so well deserved.

The lunch provides an opportunity to chat with fellow members away from a dancing environment and therefore to talk about different topics. It is good to talk with different friends on a social basis – more than one can on Monday evenings.

It was also interesting to look at the Staplers' scrapbooks that had been brought along. As always it was again nice to see Peter Rollason attending such non dancing events as he does quite frequently.

Margaret Charlton and John Cox

EVENTS

Beavers' Folk Customs Badge • 16th March 2016



Staplers were asked by a Hitchin 'Beavers' group for a talk and demonstration of Folk Customs and Country Dancing. Ann volunteered immediately and Derek provided music. Ann linked in Morris Dance so Stella, Ced and Derek turned up in Morris costume — all ably assisted by Ces, Lorraine and Graham.

The Beavers enjoyed themselves - so who knows, in 15 years' time they may show up on a Monday Evening!



EVENTS

Display at Letchworth WI • 18 April 2016



Women's Institute clubs are always keen to have a colourful and lively demonstration of English Country Dancing. Over the years, we have attracted new members from their ranks too

EVENTS

Baldock Day of Dance • 14 May 2016



This event has been organised by Baldock Midnight Morris for many years and is primarily a Morris Day of Dance where numerous sides from various parts of the country come to Baldock to join in dancing.

Staplers have participated for a number of years and again we were invited to join in the event.

Ann had prepared a number of dances which after some practice were performed (almost) faultlessly.



EVENTS

Pub Evening at Chequers, Stotfold • 27th June 2016

We kept our fingers tightly crossed all day for dry weather after last year's deluge.

A group of us arrived early at **The Chequers** in Stotfold to move benches, erect the gazebo, put out the A-board announcing our presence and search for an electrical socket to amplify Nick Plum's calling and the lively music of Derek, Chris and Michelle.

Nick called lots of our favourite dances for a good crowd of dancers, watched in the background by a few bemused locals who stayed well out of the way lest they be invited to join in.

We galloped across the nice level grass to **Black Nag**, also **Jack's Maggot**, **Sun Assembly**, **Newcastle**, **Nonsuch** and many more.



Dancing came to a sudden halt as delicious home-made (pub-made?) pizzas and chips appeared.

In the fading light we ended the dancing the **Devils Dream**. A most enjoyable evening with friends.

Lorraine Morgan



Is there anybody there in the gloom?

EVENTS

American Independence Day Themed Evening • 4th July 2016



American Independence Day fell on a Monday this year – too good a chance to miss, so Staplers members arrived in a dazzling array of costumes. Some went the whole hog and wore garments bearing the American flag, while others wore checked shirts or different combinations of red, white and blue. There was also a large number of Stetsons being sported that evening, again in varying colours and designs. Some members even accessorised (or should that be accessorized, to be properly American? – No, I think not!) with appropriate accou-



trements. I think I even saw a horse though, happily, not one which was likely to cause a health and safety issue for dancers, on account of it being a hobby horse.



Anyway, on to the dancing. Thirty seven of us came along to enjoy the dances, all of which had an American theme. These dances included: **Arkansas Traveller, Dancing across the Atlantic, Boston Tea Party, Washington Reel, Do-si-do & Face the Sides** and **Richfield Stomp**. (For anyone who is curious about the American connection of Richfield, it is a city in Utah.) We were guided through these dances by the skillful calling of Denise, Lorraine and Ced. Thanks to them, the evening passed with gusto! I look forward to the next themed evening.

Just to finish, I'll add this excerpt from the Declaration of Independence, which seems an appropriate note to end on, as there was happiness aplenty that evening! Thank you, again, to our callers.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

The Declaration of Independence July 4, 1776

Stella Barnes



EVENTS

Hitchin Buskers's Day • 23rd July 2016

Some views - both verbal and visual on the recent Busker's Day in Hitchin.



It was nice to have lots of dancing friends in our audience – one from Fine Companions, who lives at Goldington so it took two buses and 2½ hours to come.

Also another dancer in the audience commented that it was nice when we went wrong, because we all laughed when otherwise it was quite serious.

Margaret Rollason



I think a good day was had by all at the Hitchin Buskers Day. We did two time slots and a different display at each. Good crowd in the Square, a little bit quieter by the church hall except for those on the passing train (well done to Derek for his impromptu train music). Our costumes always look colourful and get very nice comments from the audience and all the dancers seemed to enjoy themselves. My favourite dances were **Square Line Special** and **Nonsuch**.

Barbara Gilder



BOGOF (or Buy One Get One Free)

This unusual dance with an unlikely name is one of our new display dances for 2016. It's a fun dance, but with a different formation and progression it does take a bit of concentration. It's all my fault really, I chose to call it at one of our callers workshops and Ann decided to add it to our repertoire.

The scene is set outside Church House waiting to go on and dance. I pull the notes out of my pocket and take a hurried look. They are on paper this year, though I have been known to use my arm to write on (much to Ron's amusement).

"Now mustn't forget the petronella and that hey... Quick, time to lead on. Where's my partner? Am I in the right place? Should we be improper?"

Wait a minute, here comes a train heading right through our dance spot. A quick wave to the passengers and sing along to Derek's impromptu rendition of 'The Runaway Train'.

Ok, we're off. Lead on, set to partner, turn single ... what's next? Oops the petronella, a bit late but not too noticeable (thank goodness someone nudged me) oh no, the hey! – keep smiling :)

Good, I've got into the swing of it now, no problem. Relief, we've finished, curtesy to my partner and take hands to lead off with him – only its someone else's partner!! Keep smiling while our appreciative audience applaud. I sure if I didn't notice I'd changed partners then they won't!

Lorraine Morgan



Keep Calm and Carry on Squeezing — A Musician's View of Practices and Displays

I wonder what they are doing now. 'They' are members of Staplers display team and I am peering at them over the top of my squeezebox from the opposite end of Stotfold Methodist Church Hall. They have just spent a good half hour walking through a new addition to the repertoire.

I should have brought something to read. Must remember to do that next time.

I think they're about to try it out. Now they are dancing it through for the third time. They seem to be getting better at it.

Soon be time for tea and biscuits. It looks as if they've had enough of that. They're not the only ones.

Now what are they going to try. *Four couples*. That should narrow it down a bit. Ought to be able to work it out when they are walking it through. Good. That's the music ready. Four bar intro and off we go.

Ann's waving her arms about and they have aborted the right-hand star in mid orbit. It's not the dance I thought it was. It must be the other one. Won't take more than a couple of minutes to find the right music. There we are. Off we go again.

That dance they tried earlier. Tune reminds me of something. What's that song about blackbirds. I know. "Sing a song of sixpence, a pocket full of rye". I think that should fit in quite well. I will work on it and see if it does. I wonder if they will notice if I slip it in second or third time through — I do and they don't.

Now it's display day. Everyone's arrived in the Market Square, but they are not all here now. Gone off to get coffee I expect. Here they come, just in time. Where are we going to dance? Where is the top of the set going to be? Where is the most suitable place for the musician? I wonder if the dances will look different from here? Should be able to follow them, though.

They're all lined up ready to walk on and looking at me expectantly. Yes I am ready. First dance is not too difficult. Four bar intro and four times through. Can't get that wrong. There's Maurice. Haven't seen him for a while. Hello Maurice. Sorry I can't wave back. Hands otherwise engaged. That dog again, barking in the wrong key. Give it a soft caramel toffee. That should stick its teeth together for a bit and give it something else to think about. Got through that alright. Mustn't get overconfident.

What's next. Got the music ready. I hope the wind does



not get up and blow it over. Five times through. Forgot to look who started at the top of the set. I wish that motorcyclist would make up his mind whether or not to go. Is this the first or second time through the A music, I wonder. They're circling left so it must be the third time. Well that's easy. Play one B. Oh dear, the B is 16bars. I'll have to fudge it and miss eight bars out. I wonder if they'll notice. Two down, ten to go.

There's the Church clock. Must be eleven o'clock. I wonder how long it takes to chime eleven? Is this the third or fourth time through? If only I could remember who started at the top. Careful what you're doing with that buggy – you nearly had my music over. They look as

though they are ready for another time through so I'll keep going one more time. We've finished together and they don't look surprised that I stopped. Must have been alright.

Nonesuch. Seven times through the first tune. Once through the second, back to the first one more time and an extra B. Or watch out for them arming. I think that's right. Don't stand there to watch, you're blocking the view. Fifth time through and they are slipping left – I think I have miscounted. Or perhaps they missed a bit out. Don't panic. It's easy to tell when they've got to the end. Perish the thought of **Picking up Sticks**. That's seventeen times through!

Turning by Threes is a bit easier. Only three times through. I think I can manage that. Look out for when they get their partners back. Must get a bag of caramel toffee next time. Missed the C sharp minor chord again. Big jump that. Sounds a bit odd. They'll have to do without the chords 'till I get the left hand sorted.

Made it to the final dance. Rain hasn't got here yet. Oh, no, here it comes. Felt a drop just then. But I have brought an umbrella and asked a neighbour I spotted earlier to hold it for me should the rain arrive. Here he comes. But he is holding it over himself instead of the squeeze box. He did not hear. Well it's not raining hard. He did thank me for lending it to him. Very useful he said.

That's done for this year. I wonder what exciting adventure Ann is plotting for next year. I hope she does not get hooked on sequences. Just **keep calm and carry on squeezing**, and hope they don't notice the many close encounters with near disaster.

Derek Boothby

EVENTS

Garden Evening – Jill & Peter Bransby • 1st August 2016



Jill & Peter Bransby's garden evening took on another form as rain had set in during the afternoon, prompting a note directing Staplers through their front door if it was raining.

Twenty four dancers turned up and transformed the conservatory into a dance hall. There was room in amongst the furniture for an eight couple longways set, with a cosy place for four more couples in an adjoining room.

Jill led about two hours of fun dances – calling out every now and then to ask how the set in the other room were getting on!

We did a great variety of dances and took turns so that everyone who wanted could have a go, including **Meillionen** (one of my favourites), **Picking up Sticks** (a laugh and a scramble to get between the end of the set and the dining table when dancing round the outside),

Splendid Shilling, **Terpsicourante**, **Dorset Four Hand** (slightly more of a challenge in the 'small' room). The **Weevil** prompted much laughter, and random changing of places.

Afterwards Jill's 'display' team showed how it was done with precision. We ended with **Halfe Hanniken**, amid much questioning of other dancers as to which sex they were representing!

The evening ended with much chit-chat, cakes and cuppas. Thank you to Jill and Peter for a most enjoyable and sociable evening.

Lorraine Morgan



Maybe the dance was **Comical Fellow** (?)

EVENTS

Garden Evening – Ced & Lorraine Morgan • 8th August 2016



On a lovely fine Monday evening in August, an enthusiastic group of Staplers, together with assorted friends and relatives, gathered at Ced & Lorraine's house for an evening of dancing on their splendid driveway. Although the weather was fine, there was a rather nippy wind, so there was no problem in getting people to dance and keep warm!

Ced kept us busy by calling a programme of dances in a variety of styles, some of which were

easy to pick up quickly, while others offered more challenge. The walk-throughs were great fun, and everyone enjoyed the dancing, even when things didn't go quite as planned!

In the dances, Gary Roodman was well represented with his **Henry's Hornpipe**, **Vivaldi in Paradise** and **Turning by Threes** (specially requested by Ann as a bit of extra practice for the display group). Other dances included the ever-popular **Barley Reel**, a galloping dance called **Suffragette** (nothing to do with the recent movie) and **Somerset Swing**. Gill and I were delighted that Ced had included **Round Pond** in the programme, as we had danced it just a few days previously at Sidmouth Folk Week.

The dancing finished with a spirited contra, **Blackberry Trace**, followed by refreshments and socializing in Ced & Lorraine's lovely shady garden. The excellent cakes didn't stay on the plates for long, and a good cup of tea was most welcome after the exertions of the evening! We brought Gill's mum with us and she had a lovely time dancing and chatting throughout the evening – indeed, a splendid time was had by all. Many thanks to our hosts for making us so welcome and providing a great evening of dancing.

Barry and Gill Goodman



EVENTS

Garden Evening – Val & Bernard Higgs • 15th August 2016

For the third in the series of Summer Garden Evening Dances this year, we descended on Val & Bernard's at their home in Hitchin. Fortunately, the weather was a lot kinder to us than it had been at Jill & Peter's two weeks previously. Now, it was mild and dry with the accompaniment of a couple of dragonflies skimming up and down the drive keeping the insects at bay.

Denise started off the evening's dancing as the dancers continued to arrive – Maggie sporting a very natty piece of headgear as she rolled up on her bike! It was nice to see so many members of the club there to support our callers. In the end, the long-ways sets stretched pretty much the entire length of the driveway!

Ann shared the calling with Denise and the two of them treated us to some new (at least to us!) and interesting dances along with a few old favourites. In the end, the light faded and even the dragonflies had flitted off somewhere to roost so we had to call a halt to the dancing. The evening drew to a close with a lot of friendly and animated chatter as we consumed the tea, coffee, biscuits and cakes kindly provided by Val & Bernard. The evening turned out to be a great success, and our thanks go to Val & Bernard for being such genial hosts and to Ann and Denise for the calling.

For those who may be interested, the dances called were:

Denise: **Dunham Oaks, Delphiniums and Daisies, Lavender and Lilac, The Bonny Cuckoo and Honeysuckle Cottage.**

Ann: **Upon A Summer's Day, Summer Reverie, Pine Cones and Strawberries & Cream.**

Lynn & Nick Bedford



...AND FINALLY

Two editorial items to end this bumper edition.

Firstly, when Lorraine & I went to Eastbourne for a short weekend break, we came across this poster — reproduced as a postcard. Apparently it was printed just after WW1 and highlighted just how many of our young men didn't come back and the resulting desperate plight of some of the young ladies.

It's probably totally 'non-PC' these days but that's a good reason to include it here if nothing else. It also may explain why so many folk want to go to Eastbourne.

Secondly, I hope you have enjoyed this Issue of the Newsletter. This is Number 55, can you believe, that I have been responsible for. That means that at three per year my involvement has been for over 18 years. Enough already. I think it's about time for some new blood to have a go, so if any of you would fancy that, let me – or any of the committee know.

Kind regards,

Ced the Ed

