

STAPLERS

NEWSLETTER

www.staplers.org.uk

January 2014

Notes from the Chairman

Happy New Year to you all. I am pleased to report there are already several special club events organised for the coming months starting with a Celebration of Twelfth Night with seasonal singing, and a mixture of dances called by nine club members. It is good for the future of the club that we are developing a substantial group of regular Monday-Nighters who wish to share in the calling for our club evenings.

As I expect most of you already know Hazel Glass died last October following a relapse after a long illness.

Hazel had been a loyal club member since 1968 and had served on the committee since 2001. Nothing was ever too much trouble for Hazel; she got on qui-

etly with whatever needed to be done, always aware of the small jobs which are easily overlooked. We miss her and on 17th February we are holding a special Monday evening to remember Hazel. We shall dance dances she particularly enjoyed, led by club callers to music provided by *Cloudburst*.

On Sunday 23rd February we have arranged a club Sunday Lunch — details to follow.

Moving into March, we have another Sunday afternoon workshop organised for 16th March, on 'American Square Dancing', led by **Geoff Cubitt** with music from *Kelly's Eye* — an afternoon I shall definitely not be missing.

On Saturday 29th March we cele-

brate with dancing the life of Brian Limbrick, the founder of Staplers, with a memorial dance in the monitorial hall at the Hitchin British Schools.

Ron Coxall, a former member of Staplers, will be the caller with music from the *Ivel Valley Band* and *Roger Nicholls* whose music Brian dearly loved. This is a ticket only event with limited numbers and tickets are available now from Ces.

On 7th April we welcome Colin Hume with Spring Greens for a 'Zesty Playford' Monday Evening and we close before Easter, as we started in the New Year, with a Come All Ye involving all club members who wish to call a dance.

Ann Gibson

MONDAY NIGHT CALLERS

6 January	Twelfth Night Special with Club callers	3 March	Nick Plum
13 January	Cedric Morgan	10 March	Jeannie Byron Williams
20 January	Joan Rutt	17 March	St Patrick's Day 'Green' Special Lorraine Morgan
27 January	Bernard Higgs <i>with music from</i> <i>Derek Boothby</i>	24 March	Graham Foster <i>with Roger Nicholls</i>
3 February	Jill Bransby	31 March	Ann Gibson
10 February	Bob Lilley	7 April	Zesty Playford Evening Colin Hume & <i>Spring Greens</i>
17 February	Memorial Evening for Hazel Glass. Club callers & <i>Cloudburst</i>	14 April	Easter Come all Ye
24 February	Chris Turner	21 April	Easter Monday — no club

After the AGM, it was decided to put Ces' **Secretaries Report** which is always interesting and worth a second read onto the website.

It has details of all the activities of the club as well as some little anecdotes.

You can find it at the bottom of the 'Newsletter' page of the website.

You will need a PDF reader to view it and details are on the same page explaining how to get it, if you have not already done so.

Committee

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

EVENTS

Anniversary Dance • 5th October 2013

Lynne Render called and Deo Volente played for our Anniversary Dance.



EVENTS

Workshop: More Gary Roodman Dances • 27th October 2013

What a lovely way to spend a Sunday afternoon – in a room full of keen experienced dancers “getting our teeth into” some nice complex dances.

John Turner was the caller, and very clear and precise he was too. There was one spectacular mid-dance crash just to prove that he is human, but long experience obviously counts because there was very little confusion despite some of the dances coming, apparently, from a book called “*Even Odder Calculated Figures*”. John encouraged us in our Staplers tradition of frequent changes of partner, and even suggested a ladies request dance at one point.

Music for the afternoon was provided by Paul Hutchinson on accordion. We received an unexpected bonus because Paul was accompanied by his partner Jude on oboe. I must admit that I did not notice the music much – I was too busy concentrating on getting the dances right – but everyone else seemed to enjoy it to judge by the clapping and cheering, and there was a nice friendly repartee going on between John and Paul.

I guess the dancers were all there for a challenge –



and that's certainly what we got – especially *Dick's Alternate Maggot* with its strange back-ring movement and double progression and 3 different ways of coming in on the ends. Several walk-throughs and at least 3 tries were needed to get it right, and I did feel rather sorry for those sitting out, but for those of us who got it in the end, the sense of achievement was worth it.

Other dances were easier to get the hang of, and the selection was well balanced – a nice mixture of slow, elegant ‘waltzes’ and fast flinging contra-style dances.

I can see why Gary Roodman's dances are so popular and the good turnout for our workshop certainly proved that. Sadly however there were only about 3 Staplers members present in addition to the committee. Where were you all? You missed a great event!

Kim Brosan

These photos were taken on my phone so fairly iffy quality but it does record the event. – Ced the Ed

EVENTS

Christmas Party • 16th December 2013



Donna & Blitzen – but who's who?

The Twelve Joys of the Staplers Christmas Party

Thank you to our dear *Donna and Blitzen* who took the reins for the Staplers Christmas Party.

The **First Joy of Christmas** was the chance to dance the Connoisseur's Contra in a valiant attempt to set a suitably high tone for the evening.

To the sound of the sleigh bells this was followed by The **Second Joy of Christmas**: Mistletoe Kisses,

For our **Third Joy of Christmas** Derek, Chris and Rachel took us on a whistle stop tour of these Islands with some very beautiful aires.



The **Fourth Joy of Christmas** was the tale of Sam Smith for whom a culinary failure proved an inadvertent success.

For our **Fifth Joy of Christmas** we learnt from Jenny and Lorraine how the cordon bleu cook devises gourmet desserts from our very own ivy and holly trees.

The **Sixth Joy of Christmas** was revealed as a far more delectable festive feast. Thank you to one and all for your contributions.

Thanks to Bernard and Val, the **Seventh Joy of Christmas** tested our fishing skills. A game into which Staplers entered in true competitive spirit. We now know who will be most useful in a lifeboat.

The **Eighth Joy of Christmas**. What party would be complete without Musical Chairs or was it Musical Sets?

The **Ninth Joy of Christmas** gave a nod to days of yore as we danced The Valeta.



The **Tenth Joy of Christmas** was, at last, the answers to the quiz. How could we have been so dull as to have missed the obvious. Thank you to Sarah for the forethought to prepare this for us. Will the winner be preparing next year's quiz?

As if the evening had not gone well enough, we ended the evening by swinging into Devil's Dream for our **Eleventh Joy of Christmas**.

As for the **Twelfth Joy of Christmas**, well, we'll have to wait for what Ann had in store to amuse and bemuse on 6th January, the last day of this festive season.

There were, of course, unmentioned joys during the evening. Thank you to all our callers for some lovely dances. It was a most enjoyable evening.

[Thanks for a cleverly written report – Ced the Ed]

Angela Gould



EVENTS

Christmas Dance • 7th December 2013

The Christmas dance was once again a popular event with many dancers present from neighbouring clubs to complement the Monday night regulars. We had the ideal number: sufficient dancers to make the hall feel full while still having enough space in which to dance.



Some of the decorations that Hazel Glass had made

Momentum's music was sublime to dance to. My mother Shoi has played the accordion in dance bands for more than 40 years so knows a thing-or-two about the instrument in the environment. For her, as well as for me, Ali Ellacott's musicianship and musical leadership of the band is second to none. When coupled with the unusual balance of two whistle melodies playing off one-another, and in addition to the excellent base grounding sound – it was all positively delicious. The band played, the band soared and so did we.

Andrew's wonderful mixture of dances (see below) stretched us some-time – yet not too often. Some callers call without watching the dancers – not so Andrew. His careful observation and supportive calling kept us all helpfully in line(s) and time.

If you missed it, you missed a treat and there'll be more in a similar vein on February 1st [*Spring Dance - Ed*] with Molly and Vic.

I love the liveliness of recent Staplers dances, the mix of old and

new with great musicianship to inspire and exhilarate.

And now for those dances – for those of a more cryptic mind-set...

Andrew Swaine assembled us all at Titchmarsh to meet a comical fellow named Hudson. On holiday with Rufty and Tufty they formed a gleeful threesome. Turning by threes they pioneered a quadrille. You asked was it a polka? Nonesuch luck. We lost, then found Sarah's juicy Sicilian fiends initially forming a Feminist Anti-Nuclear Direct Action Non-Governmental Organisation. The Greek muse of dance upped the ante while slippery Sam celebrated, with Charlene, marking one hundred years of mischievous momentum.

"Dancing contra to expectations?" Playford asked "O K Lee"?

"Yes indeed" came the reply. "A wonderful time was had by all."

Jacqueline & Stuart Beatie

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dance etiquette 21st century style.

As a teenager, starting to go to public dances, I was told to wait until a boy/man asked me to dance. But that was half a century ago!! Since then we have had equal opportunities legislation but, ladies, I think lots of us still have these attitudes ingrained – we wait to see if a man is going to ask us to dance.

Why? Why should the men always get to choose who they dance with and the women only get to dance with those who have chosen them?

We already have liberated ladies who immediately seek out their partner of

choice, man or woman, and your committee encourages everyone to follow their example!

It is also pleasing to see that many members use club nights as an opportunity to dance with a wide number of partners. This is another practice your committee wishes to encourage whilst appreciating that those of you coming as a couple may like to dance with one another sometime during the evening!

So come on ladies, don't hang back and give it a go.

Ann Gibson

IN MEMORIAM

Hazel Glass – 1941-2013

I first met Hazel at Staplers Country Dance Club in Hitchin in 1976. The following year I got some musicians together to play music for the 'Rainmakers International Folk Dance Group' so Hazel became one of the first musicians in the original line up of Cloudburst. She also played violin in the SIFD band for many years and really enjoyed the International music.

Over the last 36 years we have had a lot of fun playing together and sharing jokes (Hazel had a good sense of humour).

At Staplers, Hazel danced in demonstrations, played music, was the one who made and put up the decorations for the Staplers' dances, and her cake making, for the interval refreshments, was legendary.

On Monday 21st October, less than a week after Hazel's died, it was my turn to call the dancing at Staplers. I included in my dance programme some dances (*Duke of Kent's Waltz, La Bastringue and Picking Up Sticks*) using the SIFD recording which Hazel had contributed to.

At her funeral, which took place on Monday 28th October, Cloudburst chose some of Hazel's favourite music to play her into the church.

Hazel was an active member of this Methodist church which she loved. After the service there was dancing and music playing at Hazel's wake. Some members of the SIFD band who were able to get to Barton-le-Clay (it being the day of St' Jude's storm) joined in the music and some of the Staplers who were present led



the dancing. We felt that Hazel would have approved of the occasion and that she was with us in spirit.

Jill Bransby

FUTURE EVENTS

Spring Dance

Saturday 1 February 2014

Caller: **Geoff Cubitt**

with *Mollie Koenigsberger & Vic Smith*

Workshop: American Squares

Sunday 16 March 2014 • 2:00 to 5:00

Caller: **Geoff Cubitt**

with *Kelly's Eye*

NEWSPAPER CUTTING

This was a letter sent to the 'Herts Pictorial', 18th March 1981

To the Hitchin Gathering I did go last Saturday afternoon,

The skies were grey and full of woe, the second day of the March new moon.

It was warm inside the old Town Hall, full of men and gals all bright,

Each one bent on having a ball that would carry on 'till late at night.

Soon the place was filled to the brim and the start of the fun was due

With the Staplers forming into a ring to dance to the music of The Orange & Blue.

Joyful, smiling faces beamed, no modern scowls, punk or rock,

Masked these folk as they danced and reeled – happy contagion was run amok.

As each new 'turn' had loud applause, morris men, clog dancers, a singer sweet,

Younger I felt and my body's poise, shook off the years like so much sleet.

Colourful costumes, the scene enhanced as dancers displayed their rig,

And no spring lambs so daintily danced as the wee tots doing an Irish jig.

The MC was our dear BL, coordinating it all so true,

And if there's any more you'd like me to tell, the next one's in March '82.

Try I may, but cannot do justice to the event

M Cherry, 122 Eastern Way, Letchworth

They don't write 'em anymore like they used to !