

STAPLERS

NEWSLETTER

www.staplers.org.uk

April 2014

Notes from the Chairman

I look back on the past few months with pleasure tinged with regret – pleasure in remembering events I greatly enjoyed but which sadly were memorial evenings for past members. I think Hazel and Brian would have enjoyed the evenings held in their memories too and it was good to meet up with old friends and dance familiar dances.

Looking forward rather than back, it is good to see the club thrive as workshops, dance displays and social events now feature regularly amongst our activities. Another reassuring aspect of developing club life is the number of members showing an interest in wanting to develop their calling skills. Several are sharing evenings with more established club callers in

the coming months and I hope you will support and help them in what can be a daunting, but very satisfying experience.

Ann Gibson

[NB. This is the 50th edition of this Newsletter I have edited – can you believe?]

Ced the Ed

MONDAY NIGHT CALLERS

28 April	Cedric Morgan
5 May	<i>Bank holiday – no club</i>
12 May	Ann Gibson plus Jacqueline & Stuart Beattie
19 May	Lorraine Morgan plus Kim Brosan
26 May	<i>Bank holiday – no club</i>
2 June	Bernard Higgs
9 June	Terry Elvins
16 June	Maypole Evening with Chris Turner and music from Cloudburst <i>Pirton Village Green, 7.30pm start</i>

23 June	Nick Plum
30 June	Denise Devonald and Barbara Gilder
7 July	Ann Gibson plus Alan Dickens
14 July	Joan Rutt
21 July	BBQ Evening Jill Bransby and Staplers musicians The Fox, Pirton

Committee

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

Committee Members:

Kim Brosan;
Denise Devonald;
Lorraine Morgan



Dance Etiquette — lesson two

EVENTS

Spring Dance • 1st February 2014

Another Staplers success!

The Spring Dance this year featured Geoff Cubitt with music by Mollie Koenigsberger and Vic Smith.

I think Geoff Cubitt is fast becoming a real club favourite and our guests from surrounding clubs obviously agree with us. We had a really good turnout at St Ippolyts and enjoyed a wonderful evening of excellent dancing.

The atmosphere was friendly with plenty of banter back and forth between the stage and floor and I really felt like Geoff was keeping a good eye on what was going on at the bottom of the room and helping out when sets got in a tangle. I am hopeless at remembering what dances were called, but I do recall some lovely fast contras and challenging patterns and several of Geoff's ever-popular squares. How satisfying it is to be swirling through the moves with a square of keen dancers, concentrating hard on what comes next and having time to finish one move and wait for a fraction of a second for the next call which comes at just exactly the right time to move on to the next bit in time to the music.

And what music! We do like Vic and Mollie don't we! It's amazing how complex and rich the music can be from just two instruments. At one point in the second half I lost my place completely because "how on earth does he get that accordion to sound like an oboe?"

Some club members thought that perhaps Geoff should have shuffled the sets a bit more often. It makes for a very long time sitting out if callers do two dances in a row without encouraging a change of partners – and with such a good caller, even the most generous dancer is unlikely to offer a swap-in. On the other hand, less shuffling means we have shorter breaks and more dancing - which is just what we wanted.

Is 1st February "Spring"? Bridget's catkins said so. Well, at least this year there wasn't a blizzard outside.

Kim Brosan

EVENTS

Club Outing: Sunday Lunch • 23rd February 2014

The Committee decided it was time to brighten up this long, wet and windy winter and several brave and uncomplaining souls took it upon themselves to venture forth to research 'Sunday Lunches' at various local hostelrys. (Well done!) [As a researcher, I can tell you it wasn't that onerous! - Ced the Ed]

The Green Man at Stanford was finally selected and by one o'clock 35 hungry club members were assembled in the bar of this country pub. We were shown through to a large conservatory where we filled 7 large tables. This meant that there was much more scope for general cross table chat and banter rather than on one long table, where you could really only converse with immediate neighbours. (It was also easier to pass the gravy!)

Exemplary service – each table had its orders taken and filled promptly in turn. This meant I could be nosy and surreptitiously compare my choice with others! Ample, fresh portions were provided and you could tell which table was being served as gradually the noise level dropped, only to resume again as people finished eating and mingled.

We were certainly not rushed out and it was a rare opportunity to have time to talk to other club members and discover our other mutual interests apart from dancing.

Thank you Committee – here's to the next time?

Alan and Anne Dickens



EVENTS

Workshop: American Squares • 16th March 2014

... with Geoff Cubitt and Kelly's Eye

For this event, rather than one person writing a report, we have various dancers giving their views. As editor and also as one who didn't attend the event it is difficult for me to comment but I think it fair to say the workshop was *challenging* - for whatever reason. This was a shame as it was billed as a 'workshop for all'.

An energetic and challenging afternoon that certainly got the brain cells working.

Personally I enjoyed it but didn't get through a dance without an error.

Geoff overestimated the skill of the people he was dealing with and some explanations could have been more detailed.

Some moves were familiar such as *Box the Gnat*, *Swat the Flea* and *California Twirl*, but it was confusing, especially for new people, when Geoff walked through the dance and then added unexpected moves in the break.

Geoff emphasised that during the calling your corner and partner can change depending on your own position in the set. Your corner (for the man) is always the woman on the left and your partner is the person you are dancing at the time.

Ces Mills

Geoff gave us a challenge for mind and body as we learnt moves such as *Daisy Chains*, *Allemande Thars* and *Tea Cup Chains*. Not to mention his favourite trick of calling sequences which all ended in through eg *Star Through*, *Pass Through*, *Dive Through*, *Right and Left Through*... Many of the moves seemed (relatively) straight-forward during the walk through only to fall to pieces when they needed to be done at dancing pace - although it was good to see how often the sets managed to get themselves back on track after going wrong!

Wonderful music from Kelly's Eye gave us the energy to keep dancing all afternoon.

As with our last workshop, there weren't very many Staplers members there.

Denise Devonald

Expert band made the lively and exhilarating music flow seamlessly – exactly how smiling Geoff asked us to dance. Being at a workshop, we were all concentrating so hard that this was not always the case! However, with repetition of these complex dance patterns, we all improved, with practice, throughout the afternoon and look forward to trying them again.

Workshop for Beginners: wow – we went in fast! General comment was that we needed more time to learn. The patten call left no time to mentally rehearse. Suggest that if the moves were sub-divided into component parts and each one was identified and named, walked/danced through more slowly before they were chunked together at the 'correct' tempo, this would have allowed people to finish each move oriented correctly. Male/female differentiation was also confusing (I must be getting old!)

Anne Dickens – *together with the views of other 'Bedford dancers'*

The first half was of no help to a beginner at all. The second half started a lot better – i.e. working though the figures and explaining the patten of the dance. Then for me, came confusion, with the chorus and breaks which caused problems for each square. Also there were times when Geoff's 'miscalling' only added to the confusion. Sometimes the breaks went on far too long trying to get partners back together.

Derek Gilder

Challenging but fun. Great band.

Lorna West

EVENTS

Club Evening: St Patrick's Night • 17th March 2014

As the Staplers Monday club night fell on St Patrick's Day the committee planned a special "Green" evening.

We were told to wear something green, so we dug into our wardrobes to find those green shirts, dresses, tights and shoes and duly arrived to celebrate the occasion with a programme of dances having a green or Irish theme.

Lorraine gave us a wonderful evening of dancing. The programme was very cleverly devised and she must have spent hours researching the dances and music. Lorraine was extremely inventive with the likes of *Greenwich Park* to the tune of Eli **Greene's** Cakewalk.

It was a varied programme of some familiar but also many new dances. We danced dances such as *All the Way to Galway*, *Green Willow*, *Irish Lamentation* to name but a

few and we finished the evening with a Circassian Circle to Irish Jigs.

Links with St Patrick banishing the snakes from Ireland were explored in a poem read by Ann Gibson and the dance *Dr Bending's Serpent* by Sharon... you've guessed it ... Green!

Ces very kindly provided shamrocks and baked a selection of goodies all made to Irish recipes. As we have come to expect, the committee did us proud. I would like to thank Lorraine especially, not only for researching the music and dances but for calling them so competently, especially as there were many she would not have called before.

Gill Goodman

EVENTS

Display at Elmside Nursing Home • 8th April 2014



EVENTS

Memorial Dance for Brian Limbrick • 29th March 2014



Brian was a leader in the setting up of Staplers more than fifty years ago and along with his wife Yvonne was largely responsible for saving the old Queen Street School buildings which were of significant educational historical interest from demolition.

The dance took place in the hall of the old Queen Street School which more than a hundred years ago had been a Lancaster classroom, the Lancaster system having been devised to enable lots of boys who would not otherwise have received an education to be taught by a single schoolmaster. It was most charming, and indeed a most thoughtful act, to be welcomed at the school's gate by Yvonne and then by Staplers' chairperson Ann and then directed to the hall. A thank you is also given to all who prepared the hall for the event; there was the enormous Staplers' banner, which evidently had not seen the light of day since the days of the Hitchin Gatherings, the photos of Brian and Yvonne's wedding and of Brian participating in Staplers dancing and in Morris dancing events, as well as the interesting placards about the British School and the Lancaster classroom.

Ron Coxall, a caller of national renown, who years ago when living locally had been a Stapler, led the evening's dancing with skill, clarity and personality. The programme featured dances of the type which Brian valued and enjoyed such as Playford style dances as well as the more rural, village type dances. Regarding the latter, Brian was once calling at Roundabouts on a Thursday evening and announced longways sets for *Soldiers Joy*. On Brian's initial instruction 'Men, go down the outside of the set' we men cast to our left and sauntered down the set. Brian called us all back and explained that in rural communities in times gone by, men who worked as labourers and

in the fields and the like, if told to go down the outside of the set would simply set off down the set as told to do so; they would see little sense, on being told 'go down', in turning in the opposite direction, that is up, then do some fancy turn (that is cast) and then go down.

The whole event was a most fitting tribute to Brian and gave so many of us the opportunity to really recall the contribution Brian made to the lives of so many of those present. The occasion, the programme of dances and seeing so many people who had returned to Hitchin for the dance made the evening so enjoyable.

And then of course the music. The Ivel Valley musicians led by Chris Rutt, joined by Roger Nicholls played beautifully and their music added greatly to the evening; of course Roger and Chris knew Brian so well, Roger being the leader and Chris a member of the Orange and Blue Band who provided the music for the Gatherings, which Brian so expertly compered. Of course it was so nice to have Yvonne with us, and the words she spoke about Brian and Staplers were so appropriate and



interesting. And, although we will embarrass her, how nicely did Ann speak, kindly curtailing what she might otherwise have said so as to not detract from Yvonne's words (Ann certainly has a gift for saying just the right things at the right time). So, lots of thank you's, but most importantly, thank you Brian.

Margaret Charlton and John Cox

EVENTS

Memorial Dance for Brian Limbrick • 29th March 2014



Seldom, I'm sure has the great Schoolroom at The British Schools Museum been the setting for such a happy occasion as the Memorial Dance for Brian.

Transformation from Schoolroom to Ballroom seemed to take place in a moment – Staplers teamwork was so impressive when they arrived in the afternoon, whisking desks and benches away and arranging chairs, tables, decorations, displays and supper arrangements in, it seemed to me, the twinkling of an eye! Even more impressive – they reversed it all at the end of the dance so you would not have known the great room had been host to such a happy and memorable event at all.

Ann and Ces gathered all the ingredients for success that Brian would have wanted. The music, led by Roger and Chris, two bandleaders who provided him with some of the most memorable music that backed him in his dancing days, gave us an evening full of the sparkling music for which they are renowned while Ron, who had only just returned from Australia called exactly the traditional and well-loved programme that Brian himself would have chosen.

Certainly for me, it proved to be memorable in every way. The music, the calling and so many friends from the years during which Brian and I spent the happiest days of our lives. My heartfelt thanks, to Ann and Ces in particular, to Staplers and their wonderful committee, to the band and caller and to everyone of you who came, for adding this new and treasured memory to so many that we enjoyed in the past. Every one of you did him proud and he would have enjoyed every moment!

Yvonne Limbrick



Some dancers were just moving too fast



We end with food