

WROUGHTON RANT

Wroughton Folk Dance Club's Newsletter



July 2016

Number 114



Chairman's Chat

There was good weather over the weekend of the Chippenham Folk Festival which meant that we had a full choice of events without running the risk of being caught in rain. The callers we favoured were Robert Moir (who called at my birthday dance) Victoria Yeomans, a very competent younger caller who is also a musician with her husband Dave, together forming Deo Volente, Ivan Aitken and Brooke Friendly, an American caller whose husband Chris Sackett was dancing. As a team, they write dances in historic English or American styles which are gender-free.

Moving around the town we came across Les and Lin, Val D, Jean B with Robin who moved to Hampshire many years ago. Jean and Robin went for one day, bought a programme and worked out which dance or song events they wanted to go to and then bought a ticket on the door. They reckoned that was cheaper than buying a day ticket. I heard that Bill and Brenda were seen. Also Alan (of the red braces) who hasn't been to the club for some months because of health problems, showed he had the strength to grow a bushy white beard and I hardly recognised him.

We spent one afternoon watching the talented members of NYFTE performing in the big tent; we weren't the only ones remembering that Dave Levertton had received his EFDSS gold award from Rhodri Davies a year ago. Later, I introduced myself to Rhodri and reminded him that he would be coming to call at our dance in October.

At the beginning of May we had a most enjoyable evening from Jean Crook with some very clear calling of a variety of dances. She and Andrew were at Chippenham, sometimes at the event we had chosen. At one evening dance, Geoff Elwell was credited with being the dance director of the festival for many years, being replaced by Mike Courthold.

Congratulations to Clive and Dan who have been making their calling debut at festivals, Clive at the first-timers session at Eastbourne International Festival, having previously attended a callers workshop at Halsway Manor. Dan writes about his experiences in his diaries for this newsletter. He has clearly caught the folk dancing bug!

Please can we all try to remember to stop talking when the caller starts speaking. Neither the caller nor the dancers want to be disturbed by "noises off".

Pat

Dan's Dancing Diary

Chippenham Folk Festival & Calling a Birthday Ceilidh

I t'll be no surprise to anyone that this time I'll be writing about Chippenham folk festival, and what a good one it was! Two of my favourite bands were playing for the dances and workshops: 'Vertical Expression' and 'The Night Before'; I discovered a band called Roguery and rediscovered Fat Harry, both excellent, fun bands to dance to. Geoff Cubitt, Colin Hume, Ivan Aitkin and American callers Brooke Friendly and Kathy Anderson put on brilliant performances. I saw many, many familiar faces and danced with friends I hadn't seen in months, even a year! I drank plenty of beer two pints of which were knocked over and some of which was free, and even managed to buy another pair of spectacular dancing trousers.

So, I left straight after work carrying my big rucksack, a normal rucksack on my front, a three man tent in one hand and a carrier bag of food in the other for half an hour to the train station and when I got there carried it all the way over to the stewards office whereupon I met my good friend Robin. He gave me a lift to the camping field where my friend Jo, who flew over from Germany, had saved me a spot. I went to the welcoming American Dance then to the late night ceilidh and to the pub after that.

Saturday was full of contra and crepes and in the afternoon I went to the train station to pick up Anna, having finished her final exam that morning and it being her first time in Chippenham, and we both started our first stewarding shift in the sports hall. There being no event on until the last

hour or so, we had a very comfortable shift monitoring a fire exit and playing word games.

On Sunday I attended a callers' workshop, focusing on communication with the band and I got to call a dance. All callers who attended that workshop were invited to the new callers showcase on Monday where we managed to squeeze fifteen callers (with walk throughs) into a seventy five minute slot! I called 'The Nice Combination' by Gene Hubert, a simple fun contra, and got some good constructive feedback from Mike Courthold and Ivan. It was well received by the dancers, everyone seemed to have enjoyed it and the band, Keeping Thyme, was excellent. I was approved by two representatives of Eastbourne festival and they said they'd be delighted if I could attend their showcase next year, if I was ready. All of which was good practice for the birthday ceilidh I did the following Saturday!

To celebrate his fiftieth birthday Anna's Dad, Simon wanted to do some barn dancing and asked me if I was happy to call it. I was thrilled at the idea and spent several weeks choosing dances, writing cards and matching them all to recorded music. I prepared seventeen, I discussed with Simon timings and he selected nine and because the party went by so quickly, we ended up doing four.

Calling to total beginners is completely different to calling at a club or festival where everyone knows what they're doing. I did my best impression of an entertainer and tried very hard to explain things, call clearly, even demonstrating a few moves and make it an amusing event and those who danced had a whale of a time. I did 'Chaton Ring', 'Bottoms Up', 'Circassian Circle' and 'La Chapelloise'. Oddly there were two French circle dances and tunes in this ceilidh but they were well received nonetheless.

I thoroughly enjoyed my first calling event outside the club! I've taken away Ivan's feedback from the festival, people's comments and my own thoughts on my recent stint of calling and I hope to improve myself and expand my repertoire of dances.

Earlier this month I was asked if I would like to call for Warwick University Folk Society's end of term ceilidh and I leapt at the chance! This has been the biggest calling thing I've done so far and I've learnt a lot from planning and doing it. I spent several weeks writing my own dance cards for ceilidh dances and a few contras including 'the 24th of June' and 'British Sorrow' both rather apt!

I had to find out what kind of dances to do and roughly how many dancers there would be. I was working with a live band and had to learn to give them signals of how many times through, whether I wanted a jig or a reel and I had to adjust my program to suit the level of the dancers.

At the starting time of seven thirty two dancers had arrived and by around ten to eight there were enough people for four and five couple sets. One girl hadn't done ceilidh dancing before so I explained all the moves and everyone got it pretty quickly.

About halfway through the evening I decided to change the pace with a contra dance by doing 'the 24th of June' but I realised it was a bit beyond some of my dancers. After several walk throughs it looked like everyone had got it but after a few times through with music the set seemed to collapse and no one knew what they were doing! The biggest disaster for a caller... However, I indicated for the band to continue playing and called for a partner swing finishing opposite your partner in a minor set of four. When the A phrase came around again I called the same dance as clear as I could and everyone managed it!

There were mixed feelings about it; some people were delighted with the dance and some were dubious and in hindsight, I should have chosen an easier, if less aptly named, contra. I was filled with dread when the set started to fall apart and then stop entirely but thrilled that I managed to recover it!

There was an interval where some of the band changed into Rapper clothes and performed a few sword dances! In the second half I got a request for a strip the willow, which I managed to join in with. We ended with huge applause for the band, a Circassian circle and a waltz.

For my first ceilidh I am very pleased with how it went. A huge learning curve, a great opportunity and very, very fun! One I'll not forget. I hope I can get as many gigs as possible so more people can enjoy folk dancing because it's what I enjoy best!

Dan

Lichfield Folk Festival and June Japes at Halsway 2016

At least seven members of our club went to Lichfield festival. Several years ago Roma and I went to Lichfield for the first time and stayed at a very tranquil bed and breakfast situated less than ten minutes by car from the festival site. This year five of us stayed at this converted farm. The festival is held on a compact site which has three good sized dance venues and sufficient extra accommodation for musicians. A reasonable meal can be had from the school refectory (much superior to my childhood school dinners) and snacks can be purchased from the leisure centre bar.

This year we had some interesting workshops. One I did not enjoy but it was "interesting" nevertheless. I particularly enjoyed the workshops by Colin Hume as he has some excellent re-interpretations of many Playford

dances. Not everyone likes Colin's style but many callers use the dances from his excellent and extensive website. The best evening dance that I went to this year was Colin's Playford dance.

We also danced with several members of the Run of the Mill club, of which we are also members. Mistress Shaw (Val) makes Playford costumes and had an excellent display in one of the halls and one of our dance friends purchased a costume from her. Val has also supplied costumes for several renowned callers.

Like many festival goers Roma and I use dance trainers for workshops and reserve our soft dance shoes for evenings as this is easier on the feet. We purchased our dance trainers from Freed's of London who supply dance shoes to many stage shows and ballets. Unlike normal (trendily expensive) trainers dance trainers have the sole in two pieces with a hinged section in between which is good for dancing but also protects the feet on hard floors.

After a brief rest at home we went to Halsway for Chris Turner's last June Japes (where a significant number of dancers were wearing dance trainers).

Chris, Elaine and the Hunt family organised a lovely few days of dance and merriment. Most of us took our teddy bears and Chris called a dance specially for the bears. Trying to persuade four teddies to perform a right hand star was hilarious. We also had a teddy hide and seek. Chris and Rosemary organised some thought provoking workshops. As usual there was plenty of excellent food.

Next year June Japes will be replaced with 'Midsummer Madness' organised by Ted Morse. We have already booked our places.

Ian

Chippenham Folk Festival 2016

The festival is not just for seasoned folkies, but can be an enjoyable day out for the family. It is possible to purchase a day ticket, but I prefer to buy a programme, look at what's on offer, and then buy a ticket at the door to go to the concert or dance that I fancy. Between sessions I buy something to eat at one of the many stalls and watch the Morris dancers in the big tent down by the river. There are many cafés or restaurants to choose from if you want a meal. There are live music sessions in the pubs and sing-a-rounds there too; the programme has full details and a central map of the area with the venues marked.

By the river there are craft tents to wander round and the music tent is always interesting. Saturday and Monday there are parades of dancers

and musicians in the High Street at 2pm, and Monday also has market stalls in the High Street. Car parking is free on Sundays and Bank Holidays at the leisure centre and on Saturday the railway station is the cheapest place to park, I've discovered. Just follow signs to the town centre and have a great day out.

Jean B

A Message from Roma

Hi All
Just a note to let you all know how things are going. I started chemo on Thursday 9th of June. I have been advised that I can carry on dancing as long as I feel ok.

However I will also need to take some precautions to stop me catching any infection because, as you all know, chemo kills off some of your white blood cells. One of the main problems with this is that I have to have a picc (peripherally inserted central catheter) line installed in my left arm, so I will be unable to do some turns and will be wearing an armband to remind people. The other thing is that I will be wearing gloves to stop me having to continually use hand cleaner. Please do not be offended by it.

Roma

Notes on the Dances of the Month by Pat

Sting in the Tail (*September*)

A 6-couple dance by Colin Hume set to the music of Jacob Hall's Jig. The formation is of two 3-couple sets side by side, facing in opposite directions (men have their backs to the middle). It starts with into line siding, first on the right diagonal, then on the left with a set and turn single in between. There is a reel of four (across both sets) which needs to be kept tight or it can't be completed within the music allowed. The part of the dance which needs memory is the progression – the 'sting in the tail' - which is different from each of the three positions.

Paradise Circus (*October*)

This dance is by John Meechan in 4-couple longways sets with the 1s and 3s improper. Trevor Monson called it at Rob's birthday dance last September. There isn't a special tune for it so we shall be dancing to the tune Out of the Box on a Stowfolk CD. It is the easiest of the dances of the month this year.

Rita's Smile (November & December)

The music for this dance is Winter Dreams Waltz by Jonathan Jensen. (We have done Gary Roodman's dance to this tune.) Ian McFarlane wrote this dance which Caroline enjoyed when she was visiting her mother's club. It has six couples in two longways sets which rearrange themselves across the room, up and down the room or in a circle. Those of us who went to Chateau Impney danced it with Ian calling and that certainly helped us to see how it worked, at the time! Rob has drawn various diagrams to help to revise it. Fingers crossed!

Dance Diary September to November 2016

September 2016

- 10 Melksham Country Dancers, Tea Dance**, 3.00pm at The Riverside Club, Bath Road, Melksham, SN12 6LP. Stan Vice. Contact: Geoff Elwell on 01225 703650.
- 10 St Andrew's Assembly ECD Club, Dance**, 2.30pm at Cumnor Village Hall, Leys Road, Cumnor, OX2 9QF. Doreen Crewe with Merry Andrew. Contact: Ken & Ruth on 01235 831409.

October 2016

- 1 Melksham Country Dancers, Tea Dance** in aid of Wiltshire Air Ambulance, 3.00pm at The Riverside Club, Bath Road, Melksham, SN12 6LP. Malcolm Mace. In . Contact: Geoff Elwell on 01225 703650.
- 8 Highnam Dance**, 2.00pm at Highnam Community Centre, Newent Road, Highnam, Gloucester, GL2 8DG. Robert Moir, Bernie Culkin, Pat Hicks, Linda Selwood and Hazel Moir. Cake and Refreshments included in £3 entry fee. Contact: Bernie Culkin on 07821 106052.
- 8 St Andrew's Assembly ECD Club, Dance**, 2.30pm at Cumnor Village Hall, Leys Road, Cumnor, OX2 9QF. Keith Orchard with Merry Andrew. Contact: Ken & Ruth on 01235 831409.
- 15 Oxfordshire FDA, Playford Ball**, 7.30pm at Steventon VH, The Green, OX13 6RR. Val & Ian McFarlane with Folkus Pocus. Contact: Peter & Sheila on 01865 372344.
- 29 Weston Super Mare FDC, Dance**, 8.00pm to 11.00pm at Shipham Village Hall, Winscombe, BS25 1SG. Frances Oates with The Weston Country Dance Band. Contact: 01934 514226.

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30 Wroughton FDC, Autumn Dance, 2.00pm, Royal Wootton Bassett Memorial Hall, SN4 8EN. Rhodri Davies with Paul Hutchinson, Fiona Barrow. Contact Clive & Wendy Harman on 01793 725825 .

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November 2016

5 Melksham Country Dancers, Tea Dance, 3.00pm at The Riverside Club, Bath Road, Melksham, SN12 6LP. Colin Moore. Contact: Geoff Elwell on 01225 703650.

5 Westbury FDC, Dance. 7.30pm to 10.30pm at Westbury Leigh Community Hall, Westbury Leigh, Westbury, BA13 3SQ. Jean Foster with recorded music. Contact: Anne Polden on 01225 776766

12 St Andrew's Assembly ECD Club, Dance, 2.30pm at Cumnor Village Hall, Leys Road, Cumnor, OX2 9QF. Christine & Norman Hayes with Merry Andrew. Contact: Ken & Ruth Howard on 01235 831409.

12 Frenchay FDC, Dance, 7.30pm to 11.00pm at Pucklechurch Community Centre, Abson Road, Pucklechurch, Bristol, BS16 9RH. Mark Elvins with Pendragon. Contact: www.frenchayfdc.co.uk

19 Bristol 50th Playford Ball, 7.00pm for 7.30pm, The Village Hall, Emerson's Green, BS16 7AP. Robert Moir with Deo Volente. Contact Roger Holbrook on 0117 9508533. Tickets must be purchased in advance.

26 Highnam Dance, 2.00pm at Highnam Community Centre, Newent Road, Highnam, Gloucester, GL2 8DG. Robert Moir, Bernie Culkin, Pat Hicks, Linda Selwood and Hazel Moir. Cake and Refreshments included in £3 entry fee. Contact: Bernie Culkin on 07821 106052.

28

Contributions for the October 2016 edition of Wroughton Rant should be with Rob Dawson by Monday 19 September 2016 or earlier.
email: robdawson08@gmail.com

Club website: [www.http://wroughtonfdc.btck.co.uk/](http://wroughtonfdc.btck.co.uk/)