

WROUGHTON RANT

Wroughton Folk Dance Club's Newsletter



July 2018

Number 122



Chairman's Chat

Hi folks
Well summer is here and the weather has been pretty fair so far. Let's hope it continues and gets even better.

I would like to give a very warm welcome to all our new members who, for most of them, this will be their first Wroughton Rant. I hope you are enjoying your membership and coming to terms with the wonderful hobby of Folk Dancing.

I thought I'd better inform new members and remind members of longer standing, as to what happens in the next few months. Our last meeting at the school will be 25th July and the tradition is that we have a 'party'. We meet for half an hour longer finishing at 10.15pm and we bring some food to share, 'American Supper' style. Long tables are put up at one end of the hall and we just put the food on there and help ourselves to the spread at half time. We don't generally have alcohol but you can bring soft drinks and tea and coffee will be available from an urn. As far as the dances go, all the in-house callers muck in and we pass a board round during the previous few weeks, on which members can suggest dances suitable for the evening. It is usually a great evening.

During the summer months we can't meet at the school and the tradition has been that we meet in various people's gardens. We asked at our AGM whether people wanted to continue with these and the support was lack lustre to say the least. So we decided to go with just two this year and see what happens. Over the last few years the first

one of these was held at the house of a previous member who'd passed away, but her husband wanted to carry on holding the dances to raise donations to the Prospect. This year Brian has decided to pull out, for family reasons, so we've volunteered our garden instead. It is just space; we don't have time to make our garden a show piece! This will be Wednesday 8th August.

The second dance will be at the home of Francis and Julia Hobbs on Wednesday 15th August. Clive will send round addresses and directions nearer the time.

We will meet at 7pm for both dances to get a bit more of the daylight and then we generally ask people to bring a donation for the food table as we finish the evening with an 'American Supper' and some social time. It is a time to get to know people more during these sessions than we do on our weekly meetings as we have time to chat.

We do hope you can join us for some of these events and then look forward to seeing everyone when we restart on the 5th of September. Enjoy your Summer and don't forget to write a little something for the Rant.

It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of Geoff Titcombe . He passed away Saturday 16th June after a long battle with cancer. He will be greatly missed as he had been a long standing member of our club with his wife Maureen. The funeral will be Friday 6th July at midday at the Crematorium. Our thoughts and best wishes go to Maureen and the family.

Also we had to say farewell to one of our more flamboyant members, Les Brian, who passed away suddenly on May 8th. He will be missed greatly and our thoughts are with his widow Monica and their family

Glenys

A Letter from Latvia

Greetings from Latvia! Specifically from Dan (that young fellow with the colourful trousers who oftentimes told you to bounce around more than you wanted to), Baiba and baby Tomass. First of all, I miss you all dearly! I've not had the chance to dance much at all since moving, I miss my friends and family and many other things.

There have been monumental changes in my life this past year;

moving, abruptly, to another part of the planet, bringing a gorgeous little baby boy into this world and an entirely new job.

I can't begin to describe how different it is to be a father. Many of you will know of course what it's like to be a parent. You may even remember the lovely-little-baby, not-a-grumpy-teenager phase but that's a long way away for me! Tomass has met nearly all of his Latvian family. Soon hopefully we'll introduce him to his English side of things.

The tea and scones, dancing and beer, and his D of E award will come much later; everyone is already falling in love with him (he must get that from me) and we haven't tried marmite yet (can't find it anywhere!).

I'm pleased to say I've found a job after quite a long time. I now work as an acquisition editor for OmniScriptum. A German company with several branches all over the world, it specialises in publishing academic works such as dissertations, theses and research in the form of a book. My role is to search, on the internet, for people who have written manuscripts and contact them to see if they'd be interested in publishing with us, then helping to create their book and finally selling it. After five weeks there I've sent roughly four thousand emails, I've received around four hundred replies and am working on five manuscripts.

It's completely different to previous work environments I've been in. The few people I've met so far are quite friendly. It's about fifty minutes to walk each way. It's exciting and boring, easy and tricky. Two weeks after I started, the company had its annual global party and managers meeting, which just happened to be in Latvia this year. So I met the founder and other reps from other countries, partook generously of the free bar and bbq (it was so tasty) and somehow got home again after. I remember shouting merrily at the taxi driver in my best (although still terrible) Latvian telling him directions. He seemed rather amused and was talking to me in his best English. You can imagine how that went...

The following day was my birthday, May nineteenth, which was spent in a rather wobbly-headed state... I'll say no more.

It's difficult to sum up what's happened in one short article. Many changes have happened. In one way it feels like being swept along against my will by a huge wave and resisting the direction is futile. It

can be incredibly frustrating. At the same time, when I look at Tomass's smiling face, everything feels right.

I missed Chippenham this year and many club dances which saddens me, but there will be many more opportunities for happiness to come, and now, I have a family of my own to share it with.

Dan

Courtesy

There were a couple of incidents during May which have prompted me to write this reminder of the issue that was raised some years ago; that of talking when the caller has started calling, or is ready to do so.

At 7.45, the caller will be wanting to start their programme and will hope that members will stop their conversations. It would be courteous if members could be aware of the time and also be keen to start the dancing.

Earlier in May, when Ivan Aitken was the caller, square sets had formed and Ivan had started to explain and call the dance. Two people who were sitting out right beside one of the sets, apparently were unaware that they were talking to each other loudly. Both Francis and I remembered the concerns expressed some years ago about this issue and eventually descended upon the culprits when we realised they weren't going to stop without being asked.

Pat

English Folk Dance

I started dancing at about the age of 10 at the children's tea dances at Cecil Sharp House called by Thora Jacques, the wife of Reginald Jacques the conductor. It all happened by chance, as so many good things do.

I was born and brought up in Belsize Park, London, and we happened to live in the same road as Douglas and Helen Kennedy. Douglas was a close associate of Cecil Sharp, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst in the folk revival and he became the first and long-standing director of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, the EFDSS. Douglas's knowledge of the dances of this country was legendary. He was a wonderful caller of all sorts of dance including sword dance, he was a morris dancer, and occasionally was known to play the drum. Helen played the squeeze box.

There is a wonderful library at Cecil Sharp House, the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, where all the archives of English music, dance, song and traditions are kept. One day the librarian was ill and Douglas happened to

meet my mother in the street and asked her if she would kindly sit in the library for a few days to keep it open. This was the start of my connection with folk dance as my mother, Ruth Noyes, became the librarian's assistant and subsequently the librarian herself. My parents loved dancing, and my sister and I naturally progressed to joining them at the weekly dances at Cecil Sharp House.

We used to go to Thaxted in Essex where there was folk dancing in the street on Whit Monday. The music was inspirational. Thaxted was also the home of Gustav Holst, and hosted the meeting of the Morris Ring, when the whole street is filled with morris dancers during the day, and all the pubs are filled with morris dancers in the evening. I was impressed by the unicorn, the 'fool' of the Westminster Morris Men, which was inhabited by a remarkably athletic morris dancer who performed the most amazing leaps. Another prominent team was the Beaux of London City, lead by Hamish Fraser, who subsequently followed Douglas Kennedy at the head of the EFDSS. Dancing at Thaxted on Whit Money was a regular event in my family's calendar. It was my first introduction to the Circassian Circle which traditionally ends most dances.

As my mother worked at Cecil Sharp House she was invited to various events and, as a teenager, I was in the audience when Pete Seeger was recording a TV programme, including singing 'Where Have All the Flowers Gone'; a memorable experience. My parents were invited to dance in the Helston Floral Dance; a great honour for people who do not live in Helston. The Padstow hobby horse, the Bacup coconut dancers, the Papa Stour sword dance were all part of my teenage life (as was Elvis Presley and the Beatles).

Pat Shaw (Patrick Shuldham Shaw) lead a carol concert of traditional carols every Christmas at Cecil Sharp House. He was a great musician, had a beautiful voice, and played the guitar. For several years I played the flute at the carol concert, and there was always an excellent party at his house in Hampstead afterwards. One year the other flautist was Charles Chilton the producer of 'Journey into Space', the radio programme that we listened to avidly every Tuesday at 7.30pm (remember?)

When Douglas Kennedy was touring America in the Appalachian Mountains, a rich source of folk songs, he was taken ill. In hospital he was visited by Burl Ives and other folk singers, and his room was constantly resounding to the sound of a guitar and the voices of some of the greatest American folk singers.

In time I was selected to be in Douglas Kennedy's Sunday Club, the group of dancers who met once a month at Cecil Sharp House under his

leadership, and from whom a dance team would be drawn to appear at displays. I was lucky to dance for several years in the annual performance that the EFDSS put on at the Royal Albert Hall. The sound of the massed bands flowing from one tune to another was inspirational.

If you want a complicated dance, try The Alabama Jubilee! I'm sure Douglas added more into it than I can find online.

I now appreciate how fortunate I was in this grounding in the music, dance and traditions of our country.

Katharine

Notes on the Featured Dance

June to September by Pat & Rob

Buy One Get One Free

Another more recent dance written by a Wiltshire dancer and caller, Brian Clark, who does not like it being called BOGOF. Steve Hunt of Orion's Ring composed the music.

The main feature of this four couple dance is its unusual formation - an L shape - the caller will explain! The moves include half reels on a diagonal and along a side. Ladies need to know a petronella turn and a flutterwheel. Everyone needs to be aware of their position in the set at all times - no daydreaming - but it is satisfying to get it right.

Miss Johnstone of Ardrossan

This is a 5-couple longways set Scottish dance composed by Roy Goldring and dedicated to the musician Miss Muriel Johnstone, who grew up in Ardrossan (Gaelic: Aird Rosain) on the North Ayrshire coast. She has had a long association with the RSCDS as a dancer, teacher, arranger and composer.

The name Ardrossan describes its physical position - 'ard' from the Gaelic aird meaning height, 'ros' a promontory and the diminutive suffix 'an' - height of the little promontory. Ardrossan's roots can be traced back to the construction of its castle 'Cannon Hill', thought to be around 1140, by Simon de Morville.

Today the main ferry service to Arran departs from Ardrossan.

Somerset Square

A square set dance written by Phillipe Callens in 2009 to music written by John Hymas for the Halsway Manor online auction. It was bought by Michael Barraclough, a onetime member of WFDC

before he moved to the USA, who dedicated the dance to the memory of Bill Rutter who founded Halsway Manor, Sidmouth Folk Festival and Folk Camps.

The special move in the dance is called a 'Dolphin Gypsy'. In the dolphin gypsy two couples dance clockwise round each other, each couple acting as a unit. The movement is begun by the ladies leading and the men following. Having moved half-way around, the men take the lead and the ladies follow. Partners should have their shoulders parallel to each other throughout this movement.

Dance Diary July to September 2018

July 2018

- 6 Wantage FDC, Dance** 8.00pm at Steventon VH, The Green, Steventon, Abingdon OX13 6RR. Malcolm Bright with Liza & Grahame O'Conner. Contact: Linda & David on 01235 831482. American supper.
- 14 St Andrew's Assembly ECD Club, Dance**, 2.30pm at Cumnor Village Hall, Leys Road, Cumnor, OX2 9QF. Madeleine Smith with Merry Andrews. Contact: Ken & Ruth Howard on 01235 831409.
- 14 Highnam Dance**, 2.00pm at Gambier Parry Room, Newent Road, Highnam, Gloucester, GL2 8DG. Robert Moir, Bernie Culkin and Clive Harman calling to live music played by Cadenza. Cake and Refreshments included in £5 entry fee. Contact: Liz Stanton on 01905 353995 or lizstanton@thestantons.uk

August 2018

- 3 Sidmouth Folk Week**, until 10th. Information on the festival website: www.sidmouthfolkweek.co.uk
- 10 Bournemouth & Salisbury FDCs, Dance**, 7.30pm at Ibsley VH, Gorley Road, South Gorley, Ringwood, BH24 3NL. Ivan Aitken with Pete & Sue Hall. Contact: David on 01980 863024. American supper.
- 11 Highnam Dance**, 2.00pm at Gambier Parry Room, Newent Road, Highnam, Gloucester, GL2 8DG. Robert & Hazel Moir, Pat Hicks, Clive Harman and Brian Stanton. Cake and Refreshments included in £3 entry fee. Contact: Liz Stanton on 01905 353995 or lizstanton@thestantons.uk

- 18 St Andrew's Assembly ECD Club, Jane Austen Ball,**
7.00pm at Cumnor Village Hall, Leys Road, Cumnor, OX2 9QF.
Val & Ian MacFarlane with Merry Andrews. Contact: Ken & Ruth
Howard on 01235 831409. Entrance by tickets purchased in
advance only.

September 2018

- 1 St Andrew's Assembly ECD Club, Dance,** 2.30pm at Cumnor
Village Hall, Leys Road, Cumnor, OX2 9QF. Norman and Christine
Haynes with Merry Andrews. Contact: Ken & Ruth Howard on
01235 831409.
- 5 Wroughton FDC** restarts with Clive Harman calling
- 7 Wantage FDC, Dance** 8.00pm at Steventon VH, The Green,
Steventon, Abingdon OX13 6RR. Malcolm Bright & Diana Triplow
with Liza & Grahame O'Conner. Contact: Linda & David on 01235
831482. American supper.
- 14 Purbeck Dance Weekend** (to 16th), at The D'Urberville Hall,
Colliers Lane, Wool, Dorset, BH20 6DL. Joe Hodgson and
Frances Richardson with Orion's Ring and Stradivarius. Contact:
Karen Ilott on 01202 874496 or 07749 206499.
- 15 Third Friday Club, Dance,** 2.30pm at Cumnor Village Hall, Leys
Road, Cumnor, OX2 9QF. Barbara Kinsman with John Graham &
Friends. Contact: John G on 01865 766587.
- 16 Bruce & Eileen's Joint 70th Birthday Dance,** 2.30pm at
Yarnton Village Hall, The Paddocks, Yarnton, Kidlington OX5
1TE . Ivan Aitken with Weston Country Dance Band. Please
contact: Bruce on 01488 71294 if you intend to attend.
- 29 Highnam Dance,** 2.00pm at Gambier Parry Room, Newent
Road, Highnam, Gloucester, GL2 8DG. Robert & Hazel Moir, Pat
Hicks and Brian Stanton. Cake and Refreshments included in £3
entry fee. Contact: Liz Stanton on 01905 353995 or
lizstanton@thestantons.uk

**Contributions for the October 2018 edition of
Wroughton Rant should be with Rob Dawson by
Monday 10 September 2018 or earlier.
email: robdawson08@gmail.com**

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