

WROUGHTON RANT

Wroughton Folk Dance Club's Newsletter



May 2015

Number 110



Chairman's Jottings

Soon after our AGM, the new committee met to allocate the various committee posts and made the following decisions: Deputy Chairman - Pat, Membership Secretary - Shirley, Catering Organisers - Wendy and Hazel, Publicity will largely be dealt with by Clive with Elizabeth being responsible for the Club Facebook Page, Francis will submit articles for publication in the Wroughton Monthly. Rob will again take care of the newsletter and printed matters and Pat will write about the Dance of the Month in each newsletter.

We are now well into 2015 and our thoughts are turning to the half-term and summer break activities. Arrangements are well in hand for the Dance and Jacket Potato Evening at the Church Hall, Wroughton on 27th May; those of you who have sampled Wendy's jacket potatoes will know that this is an evening not to be missed!

During the 5 week school summer break, we will be dancing at Brian Cassidy's home in Liden when we will again be raising money for the Prospect Hospice. We will also dance at Julia and Francis home at Elcombe, Janette and Jonathon's at Great Somerford, Alan Rothwell's at Freshbrook and at the Village Hall at Liddington. Look out for further details.

Chippenhams Folk Festival is just around the corner (date wise and location wise!). A superb event over the May Bank Holiday weekend. With so much happening, it is well worth at least one or more visits.

Enjoy all the events that I have mentioned.

Francis

My Great Big African Adventure

When I was six I began to collect Brooke Bond Tea cards. It was a frustrating pastime because we never drank quite enough tea for me to be able to collect a full set of anything. But I still remember the pictures and when I was eight they brought out a set of African animals. Such exotic names – impala, okapi, kudu, oryx. I was mesmerised by the words and the patterns of the animals' coats. I made up my mind that one day I would go to Africa and see them for myself. That daydream stayed in the back of my mind always and eventually I decided it's now or never.

The safari tour I chose was booked and paid for but four weeks before I was due to travel it was suddenly cancelled. At first I decided that it just wasn't meant to be but then I thought what the hell, you don't need a tour – just do it yourself. So early one murky January morning I flew to Johannesburg and on to Maun in Botswana. From there it was a short flight in a tiny plane to a grass airstrip in the middle of the African savannah. Sixteen hours after leaving England I was watching a red and gold sunset reflected on the backs of a friendly and noisy pod of hippos and I knew my adventure had begun.

I spent two weeks travelling up through the Okavango Delta by plane, jeep and canoe stopping off at safari lodges on the way. I met people from all over the world, visited local villages and conservation projects, ate extraordinary food and encountered all the wildlife I could have desired. In Chobe National Park I saw a pride of lions bring down and devour a buffalo (not for the squeamish!) and encountered a gathering of hundreds of elephants.

I moved on into Zimbabwe – a border crossing that I do not want to repeat. The heavily armed border guards were very suspicious of a middle aged woman travelling alone and almost withheld my passport but eventually they let me through and I travelled on to Victoria Falls encountering a leopard on the way. The Falls were stupendous, and very noisy – the local name Smoke that Thunders is very apt. I moved on to a tented camp miles from anywhere where I met my first cheetahs. The camp was regularly invaded by elephants who liked to steal bars of soap from the showers. They were very placid until one evening when a couple of hyenas turned up and mass hysteria set in.

I carried on down to South Africa for the last leg of my journey and spent happy game drives following a leopard and her cubs and some precious rhinos. On my last morning a pair of male lions came and lay

on the grass outside the lodge – a wonderful farewell and a fitting way to end the biggest adventure I have ever had. Now I've just got to save up to go again – after all I still haven't seen an okapi!

Elizabeth

English country dance at Highnam near Gloucester

We read the flyer on the club notice board advertising the English country dance at Highnam on a Saturday afternoon. Other club members had attended a previous event and recommended it.

The hall had a very good surface for dancing. There were four excellent callers and the dances were English or in English style. There were about 20 dancers, 95% of whom were excellent dancers (Ian was the other 5%). He finds that when he dances with really good dancers he does 'raise his game' and dance better. At half time we had tea and cake. The cake was really scrumptious and this alone was worth more than the £3 entry fee. The next dance at Highnam community centre is on Saturday 30th May from 2 pm until 5 pm. They are a very friendly crowd and we can recommend this dance to everyone.

See the club notice board for further details.

Also on the club notice board is a flyer for a Playford ball at Chateau Impney from 22nd to 24th January 2016 with overnight accommodation in very ornate surroundings. We expect this to be an excellent weekend and several of us have already booked. Places are running out so we suggest you contact Lynda or Bernie if you wish to join us.

Ian & Roma

Dan's Dancing Diary for April 2015

For the very first instalment of my dancing diary I ventured to the distant lands of London, there to engage in both contra and French folk dancing! On the 14th of March, American caller Linda Leslie proceeded with her penultimate performance in the UK and called a fantastic evening of contra with Vertical Expression at Cecil Sharp House. One memorable dance was the Kansas six hand star whereby you end up with different partners, (even men with men! This did happen to me...), different sets and a different place in the hall! Rather silly and lots of fun.

Such was my merriment that I wanted to return to the House the very next week, though this time for some Balfolk. There was exceptional

music - as is often the case at French dancing events - by a scratch band of around thirty people, Ciac Boum and Blowzabella! I did a lot of dances I'd never done before; Ciac Boum are renowned for Poitou, a form of French set dancing.

Friends of mine kindly offered this weary dancer shelter in their abode for both nights and I enjoyed seeing the many wonders of Camden and Spitalfields markets. These same friends, and a few others, decided to do a clandestine mazurka on Sunday 15th. We brought some little speakers and one girl brought her violin to Leadenhall market and six of us just danced and played in the street. One pair of passers-by even stopped to take photos!

It was a very happy occasion, not embarrassing at all, and I'm rather pleased with myself for dancing a bourée whilst holding a hot chocolate!

Dan

Halsway Playford Weekend 27-29 March

A Playford Weekend sounds a sedate affair, but this one most certainly was not! A young caller, Andrew Swain, led the event, together with a young four piece band called Boldwood. They had brought along energetic partners who seemed more familiar with ceilidhs rather than Playford dances but they picked up new movements without much difficulty and seemed to enjoy themselves. I went with Alan, Roma and Ian, and I think we all came home exhausted and full of good food.

A lively dance on Friday evening was followed by two workshops on Saturday morning exploring the early dances and how they were performed. Andrew read the original instructions from a printed copy of the Playford collection of dances and it seems that the early dancers always started on the left foot. If the movement was repeated they started it on the right foot. So 'up a double' or 'turn single' or 'set towards your woman' started on the left foot, and then the right. As most of the dances were quite lively, this proved hard to remember. A skip change step (which had developed from skipping) was also done to the left and then to the right.

Another two workshops took place after lunch for those with enough energy (like Ian) but I caught up with some reading before the four of us donned our Playford costumes and took to the floor again on Saturday evening. Again, there was lively dancing and a few aching feet by the finish, with some dancers leaving early. Afterwards we all put our clocks forward by one hour.

Up an hour earlier and Sunday morning brought a further two workshops, this time of later dances and some that were familiar to us, including Kelsterne Gardens, Newcastle, Portsmouth and Mr. Isaac's Maggot. There were, however, some very interesting variations, mostly attributed to Colin Hume. It seems that later dances had everyone starting on the right foot, which was much easier. The programme included some triple minors, and all were danced with enthusiasm. After a roast dinner, there was a final session of the favourite dances (those with the most ticks) and instead of finishing the weekend with the usual cream tea a large 50th birthday cake was sliced up which was very nice. All in all, an excellent weekend and we all booked for next year's event, although it will be held a bit later in April next year and a different caller will be leading. It seems that Halsway is trying to bring in new callers to the event, so next year's dance should be as interesting as this year's proved to be.

Jean B

Notes on the Dances of the Month by Pat

Doodling (*May*)

The dance and the music for this 4-couple dance were written by Naomi Alexander. Rob and I first came across it at a Saturday dance in Melksham about 16 years ago, when Ron Coxall was calling, and we loved it – and Ron Coxall, whom we had not met before. The music has since been recorded by Stowfolk, Naomi's daughter's band. Your brain and body need to be able to move quickly to keep up with the music.

Shoreham Star (*June*)

This circular dance for 5 couples first appeared at the Sussex Folk Harvest in 1987, an event organised by the Sussex District of the EFDSS, to encourage the composition of folk songs and dances. There is the same introduction to each of the five turns of the dance. The active couple is in first place and the men with whoever their partner is at the time take turns in being the active couple. Ladies change their partner during an all-five-ladies-star-chain and should end with their original partner. The music is at a measured pace.

The Phoenix *(July)*

This dance for 4 couples in a longways set was first published after the Great Fire of London when ships and several plays were called The Phoenix, after the mythical bird which arose from its own ashes. Cecil Sharp interpreted it in 1912 and said use running step throughout the dance. It is unlikely that we shall do that but it is a warning that the dance is fast. (Who says Playford is slow?) The dance has six parts and is not progressive i.e. you don't have to do it from four different positions.

Dances with a Double Figure of Eight *(September)*

It is important to listen to the instructions about which couple crosses and which couple casts to start the move. If the ones cross down, the twos cast up into their place before they cross down, and the ones then cast up and so on until everyone gets back to where they started, having followed the same track. If it is only half a double figure of eight, you finish where your partner started.

Our Trip to Cuba

Many of you will know that we recently went to Cuba for a holiday. It is a fascinating island. We only saw about a third of it but much of what we saw was attractive with idyllic beaches and beautiful villages and mountains. The people appear to be relatively poor but you see no beggars as such. They have a true communist regime and over the years it has worked. Everyone gets paid roughly the same amount whatever they do. On top of this they have a ration of food and a house which is theirs. When the communist state was set up they built houses for those without, the size being relevant to the number in the family so there are a lot of small boxes all with their verandas and the rocking chair!

The problem with Cuba is that it has 2 currencies. One in which the workers are paid and is used by the locals to buy essentials. The second currency is that used by tourists. It is also used for buying things from abroad so anyone with relatives living in the USA, and there are a lot of those, they bring goods in which are sold around on the alternative economy using this second currency. It does make a degree of discontent as the Pedal taxi lad could earn more than the surgeon. Tourism is increasing so goodness knows where that is going to end.

Our main reason for choosing Cuba was that our daughter was marrying a Cuban lad in Cuba. This was to be 3 days after our holiday. They had a lot of troubles with paper work as, not only was it an international marriage, but also she is living in New York at the moment! Anyway it was all sorted out with days to spare. It meant the months one generally had to plan the wedding ended up in a few weeks. Due to problems with paperwork it ended up as a registry office wedding which was ok. After the ceremony we all piled into the famous open top American 1950s cars and drove through Havana with the horns blaring and everyone waving. It was really great fun. To finish it off the official photographs were taken on the beach in the evening sun. It was brilliant!

Glenys and Tony

Dance Diary May to September 2015

May 2015

- 9 St Andrew's Assembly ECDC, Dance**, 2.30pm, Cumnor VH, Leys Road, OX2 9QF. Roy Garrington with St Andrew's Assembly. Contact: Ken & Ruth on 01235 831409.
- 9 Memorial Dance for Kathy Ellis**, 7.30pm at Shipham Village Hall, BS25 1SG. Sue Horsham and Rosemary Hunt with Orion's Ring. Contact: Pat Hicks on 01934 742853.
- 16 Westbury FDC, Spring Dance**, 7.30pm, Westbury Leigh Community Hall, Westbury Leigh, Westbury, Wiltshire BA13 3SQ. Frances Oates with Pendragon. Contact: Ann Polden on 01225 776766.
- 27 WFDC Half-term Dance**, 7.00pm to 9.30pm at Wroughton Parish Church Hall. Cost £2— to include jacket potato supper. Please ensure Clive/Wendy know you are coming in advance to organise the catering. Contact: Clive/Wendy on 01793 725825.
- 30 Highnam Afternoon Dance**, 2.00pm at Highnam Community Centre, Newent Road, Highnam, Gloucester, GL2 8DG. Robert Moir, Bernie Culkin, Pat Hicks and Linda Selwood to recorded music. Contact: Linda Selwood on 01452 840229.
- 30 Wantage FDC, 40th Anniversary Dance**, 7.30pm, Steventon VH, The Green, OX13 6RR. Malcom Bright and Diana Triplow with Connect 2. Contact: David & Linda on 01235 831482.

June 2015

- 5 Stonesfield FDC 43rd Folk Dance Weekend**, to 7th, 8.00pm at Stonesfield VH, Field Close, Stonesfield, OX29 8EF . Geoff Cubitt and Frances Richardson with Moonlighting. Contact: Peter Bridgeman on 01608 810184.
- 6 Salisbury FDC Summer Tea Dance**, 3.00pm, St Martin's School, Shady Bower, Salisbury, SP1 2RG . Valerie Webster with Pete and Sue Hall. Contact: 01980 863024.
- 9 St Andrew's Assembly ECDC, Dance**, 2.30pm, Cumnor VH, Leys Road, OX2 9QF. Roy Garrington with St Andrew's Assembly. Contact: Ken & Ruth on 01235 831409.
- 19 Lichfield Folk Festival**, to 21st. Contact: Ann Penny McLennen on 01543 424292 or www.lichfieldfolkfestival.co.uk.
- 27 St Andrew's Assembly ECDC, Dance**, 2.30pm, Cumnor VH, Leys Road, OX2 9QF. Frances Richardson with St Andrew's Assembly. Contact: Ken & Ruth on 01235 831409.
- 27 Pucklechurch FDC Summer Dance**, 7.30pm, at Pucklechurch Community Centre, Bristol, BS16 9RH. Ray Goodswen and Stick the Fiddle. Contact: Von Holder on 0117 937 2818.

July 2015

- 11 St Andrew's Assembly ECDC, Dance**, 2.30pm, Cumnor VH, Leys Road, OX2 9QF. Barbara Kinsman with St Andrew's Assembly. Contact: Ken & Ruth on 01235 831409.
- 31 Sidmouth Folk Week**, to 7 August.
www.sidmouthfolkweek.co.uk/

August 2015

- 7 Broadstairs Folk Week**, to 14th.
www.broadstairsfolkweek.org.uk

September 2015

- 12 St Andrew's Assembly ECDC, Dance**, 2.30pm, Cumnor VH, Leys Road, OX2 9QF. Fiona Birchall with St Andrew's Assembly. Contact: Ken & Ruth on 01235 831409.

Contributions for the September 2015 edition of Wroughton Rant should be with Rob Dawson by Wednesday 15 July 2015 or earlier.