

# REEL TIMES

## The Newsletter of Melksham Country Dancers

Issue No.21 November 2015

Website <http://melkshamcountrydancers.comli.com>



Once again we are using the **CHRISTMAS POST BOX** which will be available at the **RIVERSIDE** on **THREE** Mondays – **7th, 14th & 21st December** – for you to “post” your cards. We are using the same idea as in previous years to yield donations that will go towards the **WILTSHIRE AIR AMBULANCE APPEAL**. If you are not sure how it all works please ask a member of the committee to explain **AND** look out for the explanation “flyer”. Basically **DO NOT SEND** cards instead **GIVE** money. There is no obligation to use this method as you may prefer to give individual cards to your friends in the traditional way.



Some pictures from trips 2015

WAITING FOR THE TRAIN  
TEA ON THE WYE  
BLETCHLEY PARK HOUSE  
INSIDE THE BOMBE MACHINE



**Editor:** Geoff Elwell  
**Assistant Editor:** Colin Hill

**CAN YOU FIND THE THREE  
“BOUNCY” MEN SOMEWHERE  
IN THE NEWSLETTER?**

**CAPTION COMPETITION.** Please give your entry to the committee. We need a good response.



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## **DANCES OF THE MONTH**

We continue with the **DANCE of the MONTH** theme to help you conquer some more challenges.

**November.** THE CARILLON AT SNEEK. A FOUR COUPLE dance by Pat Shaw from the book "New Wine in Old Bottles" in fast waltz tempo using music by Het Klokspel (1780) with reels, sets and casts

**December.** HUNSDON HOUSE. A SQUARE dance in the Playford style from 1665 interpreted by Bert Eccles in the "Not Quite Shaw" book. It has grand square type moves and similar moves including heys, circles and honours.

**January.** THE GAY GADABOUT. A THREE COUPLE dance by Pat Shaw incorporating circular heys, figure 8s and changing stars movement. Also from the "Not Quite Shaw" book.

**February.** SHELTER FROM THE BLIZZARD a LONGWAYS set in Beckett formation from a book "Both Sides of the Atlantic" by Phillippe Callens. Quite simple but including a progressive move around the set.

**March.** THE LOVERS FAREWELL. Another THREE COUPLE SET by Pat Shaw from the book "New Wine in Old Bottles". This is quite challenging but we shall all master it. It incorporates changing stars, a double hey, a Morris hey, a normal hey and figures of 8. WOW!

**April.** By popular request we include PICKING UP STICKS. Yet again a THREE COUPLE SET from the Country Dance books collected by Cecil Sharp. Originally from 1650 it includes the standard Playford introductions then in three parts has diagonal changes, slipping up and down the set and a sheepskin hey.

**May.** This month we will repeat the LONGWAYS dances "DUNHAM OAKS" and "FENTERLARICK" which were dances of the month in mid 2013. See if you remember them.

**June.** DARIUS a LONGWAY set with a double progression. It incorporates turns into reels of 4 and a double figure of 8.

**July.** DANCING DOPLHINS by Barry Skelton. A THREE COUPLE dance as the title suggests using a dolphin reel.

## **JOKES**

"Doc" I said "I can't stop singing 'The Green, Green Grass of Home.'" He said "That sounds like Tom Jones Syndrome". I asked "Is it common?" He said "It's Not Unusual."

A man walks into a bar with a slab of asphalt under his arm and says: "A beer please, and one for the road."

Two antennas met on a roof, fell in love and got married. The ceremony wasn't much, but the reception was great!

Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly, so they lit a fire in the craft. It sank, proving once again that you can't have your kayak and heat it.

**MEMORIES OF MELKSHAM COUNTRY DANCERS**  
**BY KATHLEEN McFERRAN - ONE OF OUR EARLIER LEADERS**

**PART 2 (and final)**

Other demonstrations I remember were St. George's Hospital Fete, and the amplification kept fading. Melksham Hospital Fete - oh dear, why did I choose The Merry Merry Milk Maids? I don't think many folk noticed the mistakes. Mr Noad, Chairman of the Hospital League of Friends, invited me to speak to the Rotary Club lunch meeting. I was afraid I would dry up with nerves, so I recorded my talk and took it with me - needless to say I really enjoyed myself and finished my talk with a piece of Playford music. I was more nervous recording at home on my own than the actual event. When my mother heard it she said I sounded like Margaret Thatcher! Do you remember the Queen's Jubilee and our demonstration on the grass beyond the Riverside Club? We girls wore long dresses to hide our legs. I think we did all longways dances, Queen's Jig, The Dressed Ship, Greensleeves, and I think, The Bishop. I remember the weather wasn't too warm, and we had to contend with the fire brigade spraying coloured water almost too near to us! In the evening I went over to Lacock Abbey with Phyllis Harrison and Auntie. The object was to call some easy dances in the courtyard of the Abbey. The weather, the smoke from a barbeque, the apathy of the crowd and my lack of experience made it a bit of a flop - still, you cannot win them all.

I now realise I forgot about our move from the school to the Riverside Club. We just had to move as the school hall got too expensive for our small group to hire. The Riverside Club has been home for many happy events, Folk Days, Garden Fetes, Parties, Evening Dances - and then we seemed to hit on a real winner in the Tea Dances, despite the fact that the club was double booked and we had to ring round to find another hall for one of Mrs Hillman's Tea Dances!

I am sorry that the children's' classes didn't do better, but I am proud of the Children's' Day of Dance, after 13 years am very pleased that it will carry on. Who knows - my grandchildren Christie and Amy may go to it one day?

Now Wentwood - there's another grand thing we are doing. I remember our very first effort. Brian Lyons, bless him, had come to play and we were on the lawn of The Grove. Afterwards we all said "Well that was hard work but wasn't it worthwhile". It was made so much easier by you good folk who went, and indeed still go along to partner the young people - keep up the good work.

I have been associated with Melksham Country Dancers for 17 years. Personally I always enjoyed the Monday classes most of all, whether calling or dancing. It has been a most enjoyable time, thank you all for all you have given me - love, enthusiasm and friendship. May I wish you all lots more happy hours of dancing, and one little word, be kind to the callers, they are all doing a grand job. Regards **KATHLEEN** (sadly no longer with us).

## Our Outing to Bletchley Park

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of October, the Club attended Bletchley Park in Buckinghamshire. Geoff again excelled in organising a wonderful day out for us with everything running to perfect plan. The weather was fantastic after the early morning fog had burnt away leaving the sun to shine the whole day through.

I am sure you are aware that it was at Bletchley that the Country's code breaking team were located during the war and where the first, recognisable, computer was developed.

We saw a number of German Enigma machines whose codes were so secure, that the Germans would not believe that it was possible for them to be broken. What a testament to the people who worked at Bletchley that they were so successful! There were occasions where British High Command were actually reading German decoded messages before the Germans themselves! What fantastic minds and very, very clever people.

Alan Turing is credited with designing and building 'Bombe' machines which could be described as one of the earliest electrical/mechanical computers. You may also be aware that the code breakers designed and built Colossus - the first electronic, programmable computer.

Churchill was so keen to protect the knowledge that the Enigma machine codes had been broken that he ordered no action be taken on information obtained unless it could have been obtained by other means. On at least one occasion for example, a fictitious 'spy' was leaked to the Germans so that information could be associated as having been obtained in that way!

The other side to the brilliant minds were the many, many (many, many, many) tedious hours of machine watching, manual system cross referencing and filing. Also it should be remembered that decoded messages were in German (and Japanese), requiring the additional steps of translating them into English.

At its height, the number of staff dedicated to code breaking was over 10,000. Secrecy at the site was paramount and there was no discussion on what was being done even between one hut and the next!!

We left Bletchley at about half past four with our heads swimming with facts and figures. An added bonus was that our tickets allow repeat admission for a full 12 months and I heard a number of people indicate that this is exactly what they intend to do.

We all had a great time, thank you again Geoff for all your hard work.

### **HELPFUL NEWS   Welfare Officer**

Heather Hill continues to contact those we know have not been well or those who for some reason have not attended the Monday nights. If you know of anyone who needs contacting please let Heather know. Maybe the Club could help.

### **Our Website**

Our website - address on page 1 – contains full details of the club programme and is well worth a visit. If any members have never been introduced to the internet and would like to, please let Geoff or Colin know. They will be happy to make arrangements for you to visit.

The A to Z of Dance Terms continued (PART 3) - taken from the club "Dance Terms" leaflet. If you do NOT have one or have lost yours ask Geoff for another copy. In this edition we cover "G to L"

**Gypsy Right or Left** – Facing partner (or whoever instructed to gypsy with) and circle around each other without hands until back to where started, all the time looking at that person.

**Grand Chain** - Give alternate hands around a circle or along a line for the number of times (hands) instructed or until back to place. Normally started with right hand.

**Honour** – Face partner (or whoever instructed) and step to right, stay there and acknowledge that person. Often followed by step left and acknowledge.

**Ladies Chain** - With 2 couples facing and a lady on the man's right. The ladies give right hands to each other to pull by and give left hand to the opposite man's left. The man puts his right arm around the ladies waist to turn her around so that the 2 couples are again facing and the lady is on the right. Often repeated the movement from the opposite side so that the ladies get back to place.

**All 4 Ladies Chain** – Similar to ladies chain but often done from a "Square" formation. The ladies give 4 right hands to make a star and go half way around and the diagonally opposite man carries out the chaining movement described in the Ladies Chain. Often repeated the movement from the opposite side so that the ladies get back to place.

### CLUB TRIPS Generally

It must be said that the number of Club Members attending our outings are not huge. These events require a great deal of time and effort to organise and perhaps begs the question as to whether or not the membership really want this? A matter for discussion at the AGM perhaps? Also await a choice form soon.

#### Your Committee:

**Chairman:** Barry Reeves

**Secretary:** Geoff Elwell

**Treasurer:** Colin Hill

**Committee Members:** Meg Elwell,

Christine Clark, Trevor Lutkin, Edna Day-Phillips,

**Publicity:** Geoff Elwell: 01225 703650

**TEA ROTA:** Tea makers needed for **FUTURE MONDAYS** please fill in the list that Meg holds. **THANK YOU**

**IMPORTANT.** Members are asked to arrive for club nights just before 7.30 to help arrange the chairs around the room. **THANK YOU**

Caption Competitions RESULTS. There were 13 entries from 9 members.



Ooooooh, your hands are cold  
Winner:-  
Colin Hill

A pure coincidence  
both winners are committee members.



You won't always look up to me; in a few years I'll be looking up to you.  
Winner:- Edna Day-

Annual Dance report

For those who attended our annual dance - including 17 of our members - thank you for your support and well done. Frances Oates gave us a nice variety of dances, some of which certainly helped to stretch the brain. That must be good and will help to make us enjoy our Monday nights even more. The music from the Weston Country Dance Band (John & Mary Brock) certainly kept our feet tapping. The NEW venue at Southwick proved to be an easy venue to run and was quite adequate for our use. Unfortunately there were only 40 of us to enjoy it and the club was down financially but for this event it was felt worth it.

Wye Valley / Dean Forest Railway Outing

On the 1<sup>st</sup> July this year, the Club enjoyed a fantastic day-out in the Wye Valley. The coach, expertly driven by Will, collected those attending from a number of local pickup points before setting off proper to the Gloucestershire area. Our first stop was at Lydney where we were to pick up a trip on the Dean Valley Railway. We boarded a steam train and enjoyed a very pleasant 1½ hour return trip to Parkend. On return we spent some time enjoying lunch and visiting the station café, museum and shop.

After lunch we re-boarded the coach before relocating to Symonds Yat. The weather was just incredible: it was reported as being the hottest day of the year and really challenged the coach's air conditioning system! We were looking forward to our next adventure; a 45 minute cruise up the River Wye by boat. We had hoped for some respite from the heat but even on the water the air was very still!. The boat's Skipper gave us some very interesting information along the way outlining places of note and explaining what wildlife could be found habiting the area including peregrine falcons, mink and salmon. The trip also included tea/coffee and biscuits within the cost of the ticket as a bonus. The Symonds Yat area is incredibly beautiful and a delight to experience from the river. The calm of the river, the towering hillsides and wooded areas make it a prime attraction for nature lovers and those that appreciate the beauty of the British countryside.

On return to shore there was time, **after clearing Customs**, to visit the amenities and shops at the riverside complex before the weary, but very happy, party returned home.

The day was greatly enjoyed by all and everyone agreed that it was incredible value for money. Our thanks to Geoff for organising such a wonderful day for us.

### **CAMPING AT HALSWAY AND ENJOYING EVENTS THERE**

As most of our dancers know I have two little dogs and a Romahome. This little home gives me freedom to go places and events taking the dogs with me. I never go anywhere if I can't take them unless it is unavoidable. Halsway Manor allows me to camp in the water garden - as someone told me it is called. So this means I can go to their events. Twice last year I went and thoroughly enjoyed meeting lots of lovely people and very rarely missing a dance through lack of a partner. I also love the challenge of learning new and quite complicated dances at the workshops.

Again this year I have already been twice treating myself to a few days in April as a birthday present. This was with Rhodri Davies and Bob Morgan where we did a lot of Playford dances, some very challenging. One of the workshops was for callers. I went and found it very good. Covering the many aspects of calling with a live band including the dance, music speed and how many times through. We were given a dance to call and practise in the workshop. Then we had to call for an actual evening dance. I had one of the Ted's Triplets dances and although I made a few mistakes at first by practising out loud in my caravan later delivered it perfectly in spite of feeling very nervous. I found having the dance in my head and calling it out loud for real was very different with live music. Again in June at "June Japes" I had the opportunity to call the same dance and more or less mastered it in spite of my nerves and the set in front going wrong. I learnt a lot to help me call. This June event was great with quiz papers indoors and outdoor games all adding to the overall enjoyment. Because the weather was intermittent and the grass rather wet we managed to only do Maypole dancing on the last day. Shame. All in all I really enjoy going to Halsway. In September I attended the members dance and AGM and I look forward to going again soon.

CHRISTINE CLARK

### **CHILDRENS DAY OF DANCE**

You may not all be aware that each year the club runs a Children's Day of Dance in the Assembly Hall. In 2016, on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March, it will be the 40<sup>th</sup> (and sadly the FINAL) event. It was started in 1976 using music from CDs and Tapes by Kathleen McFerran (see page 3 for more about her "jottings") and Stan Vice, our club caller, who has called every year since. Well done Stan and thank you so much - you have given many children much fun and encouragement. In 1983 (we believe) Brian Lyons and friends offered LIVE music and have played for the day ever since. The attendances have varied between a massive 500 and more lately 300. In the 80's the children were also spellbound by Gary Nunn (a professional entertainer). For many years Folk items for sale were available. 2001 saw the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary at which a badge and bookmark were presented to each child. The Town Mayor and Town Crier have often attended much to the joy of the children. During all this time Christine Gale has been the publicity officer and secretary. Many thanks for that.

# EVENTS DIARY 2015/16

<p><b>Tea Dances</b> (usually the 1st Saturday—but NOT January)</p> <p>5 December Brian Lyons  <b>9 January</b> Jean Crook          6 February Ian Ludbrook          5 March Barry Reeves          26 March Robert Wright  <b>(Easter Dance for Dorothy House)</b></p>	<p><b>Visiting Callers</b></p> <p>14 December Peter Bolton          1 February Robert Wright          14 March Jean &amp; Dick Shilton          9 May Ivan Aitken          20 June Pam Shears</p>
<p><b>Next Committee Meeting</b> 15th March</p> <p><b>Next AGM Evenings</b> 4th April</p>	<p><b>Request Nights</b> 7th December, 22nd February, 16th May</p>
<p><b>Next Coffee Morning</b> Tbc in February</p>	<p><b>No Meeting</b> 28th Dec, 28th March, 2nd May or 30th May.</p> <p><b>Children's Day of Dance</b> <b>Wednesday</b> 16th March</p>

## A Family Celebration

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of September my parent's celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> 'Diamond' Wedding Anniversary. The family gathered in Grantham, Lincolnshire, on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September and we took the special couple out to lunch. Neither are in fantastic health and my mum had a bit of a 'turn' at the restaurant but soon recovered and the celebrations continued.

Gifts and well wishes came from as far afield as Australia.



Mr. and Mrs. Eric Pearson

You may not be aware that the Queen sends a congratulatory card on 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversaries and every five years thereafter? Mum and Dad were absolutely delighted and highly honoured with their card and have it framed in their lounge. It is important to know however that such cards, including centennial birthday cards, have to be requested as they do not arrive automatically. A photo of the card is shown here.

It was really good to meet the family again as, like so many families these days, members are spread across the country and indeed the world.

**Heather Hill**