

LET'S SQUARE DANCE

(Email version)

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Dave Clay retires (P 12)

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EDITOR SAYS.....

Hi everyone.

Some very readable articles this month. Thanks to all of you who sent items in; please keep them coming !!

Many of us will remember dancing to Dave Clay, whose retirement is reported on page 12.

John Stallard's 'Green Thing' submission rings so true and Jill's History lesson makes interesting reading. Carol Geary's report on what Testvale Squares are doing could inspire many Clubs to begin to get active again in readiness for next year.

Our Treasurer Koli has devised a cryptic quiz for us (P 15), and hopes to follow it up with more in the future . If any more of our readers have puzzles, we'd be very happy to see them.

If you haven't tried Virtual Square Dancing yet, there's a 12 hour (!!!) 'Light the Candles' dance on Saturday December 5th. See the flyer on the last page of this mag. The zoom link will be shown on the VSD group's page on Facebook a few hours beforehand.

As Susan says in her musings this month, things are beginning to look up a bit, and we can begin to see some light at the end of the tunnel.

Keep smiling



Peter

Presidential Musings for December 2020

Breaking News :

Dateline: Monday 9th November 2020 Location: Winslow Buckinghamshire

Sitting in my house on a damp dreary November afternoon, I hear the news on the radio that Pfizer and BioNtech has just announced that it may soon be ready to roll out a Vaccine for Coronavirus that is 90% effective. Could that mean that in the not too distant future Square and Round dancing can resume? That fills me with hope. At last there is light at the end of this interminable tunnel. Hallelujah!

I remember at the beginning of Lockdown asking you all to try and locate the B.A.A.S.D.C. banner. Sadly no-one has contacted me to report finding it. However, as a consummate optimist I'm hoping that someone is keeping it 'under wraps' and that it will suddenly appear cleaned and pressed in time for me to take to the next European Convention to be held in Vienna in 2022. Thank goodness we now have the very real prospect of having something wonderful to look forward to. I have never been to Vienna so that will be a 'first' and there is a stellar line up of International Callers and Cuers.

Sadly no-one spotted my deliberate mistake in my report for the Annual General Meeting. My quote 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times' was in truth the opening line from Charles Dickens's novel A Tale of Two Cities and not Bleak House.

In recent discussions with Council members it was pointed out that using the abbreviated L.S.D. instead of Let's Square Dance for the magazine has very interesting connotations. Together with the abbreviated V.D. for Virtual Dancing, outside parties could very well get excited about what our activity actually offers. It reminded me that in the past several of our Clubs had to change their names from Swingers to Swirlers or some such other innocuous name. My personal opinion is that we just need to recruit dancers and anything that attracts their attention should not be ruled out. Ha! Ha!

Christmas is traditionally the time to contact friends old and new and this year perhaps more than ever before, it is especially important that we keep in touch with our dancing friends. Perhaps contacting someone you haven't seen since dancing was suddenly stopped, would be a wonderful way to impart the message of Peace and Goodwill to all men' and dancers of course!

Well, I shall be thinking of you all this Christmas. I hope that whatever form it takes in your life this year, it brings you some joy and gladness.

Let's make Square and Round dancing great again!

Susan Ellis



Hi everyone,

Today I volunteered to help launch the "Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal" for 2020 here in Wolverhampton, It was a bit of a pay back for me, because a few years ago they helped one of my Sons through a difficult period in his life.



The reason for this letter is that it was so rewarding for me personally, the generosity of the Wolverhampton people who queued around our stall was overwhelming. On one occasion a elderly lady approached the stall clutching a £20 note, she said, this is a donation from my husband, he passed away 24 years ago, but before died he made me promise to donate £20 every year for the Poppy Appeal. This is his donation for this year. (Phew, that nearly cracked me up.)

We managed to go on to fill 6 collection tins, I estimated around £800/£900 pounds in the tins, mainly £5, £10, £20 notes crammed in, and about £100 paid by card.

I think I was getting a bit down just lately, mainly due to the stupid idiots who won't wear a mask or social distance, but those people today made me realise that there are more good and caring people in the world than bad, they gave me back my faith in human nature, so God Bless them.

Keep the faith, stay safe.

Brian Summerfield.

Model Making while not Square Dancing

When Waggoners (and Cuffley) SDC went on hiatus in March I wondered what I could do with the extra few hours each week when I would normally be at Waggoners.

I decided to have a go at resurrecting my favourite hobby from about 40 or so years ago . I always enjoyed making Airfix kits (mainly aircraft but also ships and military vehicles and had built up a stash of kits that have been kept in a cupboard since I bought my own property 36 years ago. There never seemed the time or space to make up any kits until now

I decided to have a go at making a Hawker Hurricane which I started at the end of March. I had intended to work on this model at the times when I would have been at Waggoners , U3A group meetings etc. Things did not work out quite as I had intended and I found that I was only working on the Hurricane for short spells sometimes only a few minutes at a time. Consequently I have only just completed the model! This was only a practice so the next model that I make should be made a bit quicker and maybe a bit better.

I have attached a photo of the finished aircraft. The Hurricane in the photo is wearing the same markings as my model!

Roy Smith



PAY ATTENTION

I started to learn square dancing in my late sixties and very quickly realised that hearing the calls was just as important as knowing what they meant. My hearing is not as sharp as it once was though I can usually distinguish between "left" and "right"; whether my body then moves in that direction is a different matter! Occasionally I have heard dancers blame the caller for muttering or for having a strange accent. Sometimes poor acoustics do contribute to mishearing but generally it is, I think, the dancer's own hearing which is the culprit.

Mishearing can, of course, cause problems elsewhere. I recall a little while ago, pre-pandemic, visiting the not too distant town of Hull with my wife. We went into a local bar for a drink and some lunch. Having chosen from the menu I approached the bar and placed Isabel's order but, before I could order my own meal, the girl behind the bar asked, "Waah waah?"

Was this some local ritual? A chant? Argot of which I had no knowledge? I decided that, at 70+, the question was perhaps not being directed at me. I adopted a look of bemused disinterest and gazed a little vacantly into the distance.

All to no avail, this time "Waah waah?" came again and was very obviously directed at me. I struggled mentally to make sense of this question, glancing around to see if anything nearby might give me a clue as to her meaning. Playing for time I feigned deafness, "Sorry, what was that?" I asked. Again came the meaningless question, "Waah waah?"

There could be no escape. Desperately and rapidly I tried to recall all the strategies which I used when abroad. There was no one word which was presenting a stumbling block, I had heard quite clearly what was being said but it made no sort of sense. Pointing to the chosen item on the menu didn't seem to be a good idea as my order had obviously been understood. Asking her to write down or spell what she had said seemed somewhat out of place as there was every indication that we both spoke a variation of the same language. Suddenly I remembered - when all else fails repeat the question, as though seeking clarification.

Grateful that my wife was out of earshot and that nobody nearby was known to me, I looked her in the eye and questioned, "Waah waah?"

"Yaah", she replied, "Waah waah dyah waah?"

"Oh," I replied, "A Pinot Grigio please!"

I found it a little disturbing when I began to relate this tale to our daughter who works in the area. She interrupted me to say, "She was asking you what wine you wanted!"

Barry Malin, Wolds Weavers SDC

In the new beginning.

Well before we move on; we must look back. Testvale Squares has been running for nearly six years, and in that time, we have had our fair share of successes and disasters, each and every one has been a learning curve. At the end of March 2020 our club had 54 dancers of all capabilities and enthusiasms. We like all clubs have seen beginners flourish or fail, get hooked or just fade away from the dance floor, and all the time we have maintained an air of optimism for our future. And then Covid waltzed into all our lives and the floor cleared quicker than an awful caller singing badly out of rhythm and tune to a floor full of excellent dancers. Out went the fun, the banter, the music, and the happy smiling dancers and callers, in came repeats on the telly, knitting, gardening, decorating etc. Now that was o.k. for a little while, but as the damp dank winter has set in and longer nights and shorter days, filled with not a lot, is all that is left; life starts to feel at a low ebb.

It does not have to be like that. In the time we have been away from our dance hall, the walls have been decorated and the floor has been refurbished and is shining like new. Our club has been keeping in touch with newsletters and jokes, zoom meetings and when possible some limited craft sessions. We have danced two couple basic no hands round the war memorial for a short demo, and sung happy birthday to whoever has had a birthday at the same venue, don't tell anyone though, we may get into trouble, we needed our spirits raising as it was a wet afternoon in the summer.

And what of the callers, of who we have four; how to keep them interested, well we have had regular homework set by me, that is the blind leading the blind isn't it. We have had singing practice in the garden, oh how the neighbours loved that, and we have had planning meetings. We have been looking forward.

Step one came when our community centre where we dance, that had been haemorrhaging money for the best part of the year wrote to all their regular hirers asking if they wanted their slots kept in 2021, and if so could we pay a deposit up front to secure the same. It did not take long to come up with our plan and this is what we have done.

We sent out to all our dancers asking if they would pay a one off ten pound each to cover the cost of the first 12 weeks back at dancing starting 8th January, we explained that we needed to secure our booking and that we would agree a rollover week by week should the virus prevent us using the hall. In our letter we added that everyone who took part in the ten pound scheme would then have nothing to pay for the first 12 weeks back at dancing, and to sweeten the pot a little we purchased twelve gifts each to the value of £5 and every participant gets entered into a draw at our Friday night zoom meeting, each person was allocated a number as their money came in.

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LET'S SQUARE DANCE ~ December 2020

The main objectives for Testvale Squares were.

To keep our booking at the hall

To maintain our reduced rent charges

To establish our core membership

To allow for future planning

TO KEEP OUR CLUB OPEN

The results were as follows:

Out of 54 dancers we have had 52 ten-pound replies plus one non dancer who comes every week to make the tea

One dancer has emigrated to be with her son in Australia

One very new dancer has not replied.

We fully realise that people will want a refresher course and to that end we will start back with the 12-week Jerry Story plan, obviously if 12 weeks is not required then we will adjust accordingly. We also know that some older dancers may like a slower experience when they return, so we have asked John our more advanced training caller to run a 12-week Sunday afternoon session with a gentler more relaxed theme. He will have the backing of all the callers should he need it, this should cover the needs of the older dancer who does not like to come out on a bad winter's night. It should be noted that all dancers can come to all sessions should they want and that all sessions are fully paid for the first 12 weeks.

The next thing is that we realise that not everyone who paid the £10 will be able to dance and to that end we are setting a recruitment poster competition to start in March for an April newbies course.

So this is what we have done in our club, we hope it all works out well, but as we all know from this years' experience, you can plan it , and just hope it all works out.

All of us at Testvale Squares wish you all a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year with lots of great dancing, stay well and we hope to see you in a square soon.

Carol Gerrey



Chuckle Zone

British Telecom needed to hire a team of telephone pole installers, and the Boss had to choose between two English guys and two Irish guys.

So the boss met both teams and said "Here's what we'll do. Each team will be installing poles out on the new road for a day. The team that installs the most poles gets the job.

Both teams headed right out.

At end of the shift, the two English guys came back and the boss asked them how many they had installed.

They said that it was tough going, but they'd put in twelve.

Forty-five minutes later Paddy and Mick, the Irish guys, came back in and they were totally exhausted. The boss asked, "Well, how many poles did you guys install?"

Mick, the team leader, wiped his brow and sighed, "Paddy and me, we got three in".

The boss gasped, "Three? Those two English guys put in twelve!"

"Yeah", said Mick, "But you should see how much they left sticking out of the ground".

(From Jill Woolford)

**Dear Lord,
Please don't let Brussel Sprouts
be a part of the cure of Covid-19 Virus.**



(From Andy)

The Square Dance Caller's Club of Great Britain

www.Callersclub.uk



MORE THOUGHTS ABOUT GETTING BACK TO DANCING IN 2021

In my article I wrote for the October issue of LSD I actually asked for comments about the idea of promoting this new "easier to teach/learn program" that's been called Social Square

Dancing. (SSD)

Needless to say I was underwhelmed by the replies I (didn't) received !!

Perhaps you need more information.

Well the idea is that we present Square Dancing as just one program that people can join in with and not be, more or less, forced into learning the full Basic and Mainstream programs because that's what everyone is expected to do to become proficient dancers. The feeling amongst the leaders of our activity is that this push to climb through the programs and the more and more intricate choreography that is expected from the Callers, is what is killing Square Dancing.

The SSD program is designed to be taught in twelve weeks so new dancers could easily be absorbed every three months. If they miss some of those weeks it wouldn't be long before they could fit right back in again

The SSD program would allow dancers to attend when they can and never feel they are falling behind the others in their club. The callers should work hard at giving fun and variety without difficulty. It can be treated as a social event where the meeting of friends, laughing and having fun whilst dancing to good music together, is the aim of the evening rather than being force-fed clever choreography.

The SSD program should be kept separate from the traditional MS clubs but dancers who can do the full CALLERLAB Mainstream could come and relax and just have fun too. But it's important that the program remains accessible and easily learned.

Such visitors would be welcome but not those who just want to steal dancers away to augment their depleted MS clubs.

It has to remain accessible - that's the whole point.

It's not just an entry point so that they can be pulled on up through the programs. It should be just called Social Square Dancing.

So if a caller near you sets up a club to do just this, would you support it, not try to change it, and just aim to keep the activity thriving?

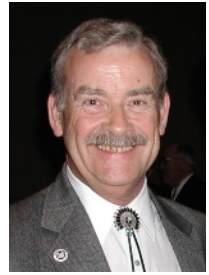
Comments please. It's not as if you haven't got the time to think about it and then tell to me what you feel about this idea. Even if it were just to say "Yes I would support it"

I would love to be overwhelmed by emails, letters and phone calls .

From Susie.



DAVE CLAY
RETIRES AFTER 63 YEARS CALLING



Dave was born in Nottingham in 1941 and has lived there all his life. He began dancing in 1956 at the Chequers 8 club in Nottingham as a teenager; his calling career commenced in 1957. Who was to know where it would take him?

In 1959 Dave opened his first club the Ranch House.

His mentor was local caller Howard Spriggs who spent much time coaching Dave before he went public with his calling. Dave well remembers his first public patter call as a guest of the Red River Valley Club whose caller was Ralph "Slim" Meakin. When Howard retired from calling in 1958 Dave and his friend John Winter took over the leadership of the Chequers 8, renaming the club the Pelham 8. Brian Foulstone became the caller of the club's main night and Dave the caller of the "Monday Squares".

Jim Lees, a fine caller and the "Father" of Square Dancing in Nottingham, was a great inspiration and played a big part in guiding Dave through his early years of calling. Dave learned his one-night stand skills from Jim and remembers his first one-night stand (hoedown) in 1959. It was a women-only group and his fee was £1.50! He was also greatly impressed by Jim's approach to modern choreography and its interpretation.

In 1963 saw the opening of Dave's club the Lucky Thirteen where he was ably supported by John Winter and Dave Huxley. It's worth noting that at the time of opening the average age of the group was sixteen! This club continued in its original home for 50 years. It catered ultimately for the dancer who enjoyed the more creative side of Plus dancing.

Dave's calling career continued to go from strength to strength and he fondly remembers the support and encouragement he received from US Col John Hayne who was commanding officer of Sculthorpe airbase in Norfolk. He quickly became a household name, calling at all the main events in England.

In 1967 Dave brought American caller Melton Luttrell to England to call for his North of England Convention. Melton's smooth, professional style and laid-back personality had a great impact on Dave and for many years he modelled himself on him. Melton remains Dave's all-time calling favourite and they are still very good friends.

A great supporter of new callers he was always eager to share his knowledge with them. His happiest achievement was teaching Harry Preston his great friend who sadly is no longer with us. Following Harry's death in 1979 he took over the calling for the Dial A club. He remained the caller of Dial-a-Square up to the COVID outbreak and had spent 41 years running the club with Jean Preston (the best cuer he ever worked with and his best square dance friend) until she retired in 2017. Dave took over ownership of the club, and worked in

harness with club managers Carol & Keith Sutcliffe.

The early 80s marked Dave's introduction to the Advanced and Challenge movement and in 1982 he opened the ACES club calling and teaching the Advanced Programme. The club continued dancing up to the C2 Programme until COVID. Dave became a big fan of John Marshall when calling the Advanced and Challenge programmes. He & John forged a close friendship which continues up to the present day.

Dave has given much of his spare time to the promotion and development of Square Dancing. He was training officer, newsletter editor, and president of the Callers Club of Great Britain. Until the last few years, he was very active in the BAASDC and the area association where he became chairman. He chaired the National Convention committee for two years. As a Callerlab member, he served on many of their committees. He received a special certificate of appreciation from them in 1996. He was always a strong believer in their principles, attending conventions in San Antonio, Reno, Louisville; Charlotte, Colorado Springs, Los Angeles and a mini-lab in London. Dave was never prouder than when he was asked to MC the Callerlab dinner in Los Angeles.

He called specials and festivals in every corner of England and has been a featured caller at many events in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Wales, Scotland, Guernsey and the USA.

A very challenging and stimulating caller, he has always been popular with those dancers seeking something a little out of the ordinary.

Since the very beginning Square Dancing was Dave's first love and he dedicated all his spare time to promoting and working within the activity. His constant companion and wife Leigh was at his side for thirty years. She sadly died suddenly in November 1999 and it was felt for a while that Dave might not continue without her. Dave underwent heart bypass surgery in February 2000 and did carry on calling although he felt that he didn't have the same strength for the activity that he once had. He was re-married in 2001 to Gill (a great friend) and together they worked together to re-build Dave's motivation back to a point where he felt more comfortable with the activity once more.

He gave up travelling and special dances some years ago but remained active in his clubs until now, when he is hanging up his microphone for a life of relaxation.

The Dancers at Dial A Square, and Aces wish Dave all the very best in his retirement. We shall miss him.

Keith and Carol Sutcliffe



Dave and Jean Preston Demonstrating a round at Guernsey. One of Dave's greatest delights was dancing with Jeannie.

LET'S SQUARE DANCE ~ December 2020
Tilehurst SDC – Charity Donation 2020

As with every square dance club in the UK, the Tilehurst club has not met since March due to the Coronavirus situation and apart from being unable to dance, the other activity that members enjoyed doing and were missing,



was raising funds for charity. Wondered what they could do positively to support the charity that had been nominated by members at the Annual General Meeting at the end of 2019, a vote was held to agree a course of action which looked at how a donation could be made despite being unable to raise any further funds.

It was agreed that member subscription fees be combined with the monies already collected plus a contribution from the club account to make up a donation that would approach the amount that would normally be donated each year. This enabled the sum of £1000.00 pounds to be presented to the chosen charity, Thames Valley Air Ambulance.

A thank you email was sent to members with a few words from the person who nominated the charity, Kath Sammars:

"The Charity that we supported at last year's AGM, is the Thames Valley Air Ambulance Service. It is not Government or Lottery funded and relies on volunteers, donations from the public and sponsored events. From their



Continued on next page

base at RAF Benson, they can attend to emergencies within 15 minutes, anywhere in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire or Oxfordshire. Our donation of £1,000 will help to keep the TVAA service operational.

Obviously due to the current Coronavirus situation it was not possible to meet with the charity fund raisers personally, but phone calls were made by our Treasurer Paddy Davis and a cheque posted off to them. Thames Valley Air Ambulance were kind enough to send the club a thank you letter and certificate which is appended to this article.

Looking to the future when the Coronavirus situation has abated, we hope to meet again, to dance again and to enjoy each other's company. Our club meets on Wednesday evenings at Victoria Hall, Tilehurst, Reading for Mainstream and Plus dancing as well as on Tuesday evenings at St John's Hall Woodley for our beginners and A1/A2 classes. We hope you can join us.

Terry Pine Club Chairman



Puzzle Time

Koli's Kryptic Kwiz #1

Identify the Square dance moves (up to Plus)

1. Let the waters succeed
2. Crop the red suit
3. Lockdown rendezvous
4. Angry discharge
5. 1 million

(Answers are on Page 23)

The Green Thing

Checking out at the supermarket, the young cashier suggested to the much older woman that she should bring her own grocery bags because plastic bags weren't good for the environment.

The woman apologised and explained, "We didn't have this 'green thing' back in my earlier days."

The young cashier responded, "That's our problem today - your generation did not care enough to save our environment for future generations."

She was right our generation didn't have the 'green thing' in its day.

Back then, we returned milk bottles, lemonade bottles and beer bottles to the shop. The shop sent them back to the plant to be washed and sterilised and refilled, so it could use the same bottles over and over. So they really were recycled.

But we didn't have the "green thing" back in our day.

Grocery shops bagged our groceries in brown paper bags, that we re-used for numerous things, most memorable besides household bags for rubbish, was the use of brown paper bags as book covers for our schoolbooks. This was to ensure that public property (the books provided for our use by the school), was not defaced by our scribbling. Then we were able to personalise our books on the brown paper bags.

But too bad we didn't do the "green thing" back then.

We walked up stairs, because we didn't have a lift in every supermarket, shop and office building. We walked to the local shop and didn't climb into a 300 horsepower machine every time we had to go half a mile.

But she was right. We didn't have the "green thing" in our day.

Back then, we washed the baby's terry towelling nappies because we didn't have the throwaway kind. We dried clothes on a line, not in an energy-gobbling machine burning up 3 kilowatts wind and solar power really did dry our clothes back in our early days. Kids had hand-me-down clothes from their brothers or sisters, not always brand-new clothing.

But that young lady is right; we didn't have the "green thing" back in our day.

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LET'S SQUARE DANCE ~ December 2020

Back then, we had one radio or TV in the house - not a TV in every room and the TV had a small screen the size of a big handkerchief (remember them?), not a screen the size of Scotland in the kitchen. We blended and stirred by hand because we didn't have electric machines to do everything for us. When we packaged a fragile item to send in the mail, we used wadded up old newspapers to cushion it, not Styrofoam or plastic bubble wrap. Back then, we didn't fire up an engine and burn petrol just to cut the lawn. We pushed the mower that ran on human power. We exercised by working so we didn't need to go to a health club to run on treadmills that operate on electricity.

But she's right; we didn't have the "green thing" back then.

We drank from a tap or fountain when we were thirsty instead of using a cup or a plastic bottle every time we had a drink of water. We refilled writing pens with ink instead of buying a new pen, and we replaced the razor blades in a razor instead of throwing away the whole razor just because the blade got dull.

But we didn't have the "green thing" back then.

Back then, people took the bus and kids rode their bikes to school or walked instead of turning their Mums into a 24-hour taxi service in the family's £50,000 people carrier which cost more than a whole house did before the "green thing."

We had one electrical outlet in a room, not an entire bank of sockets to power a dozen appliances and we didn't need a computerised gadget to receive a signal beamed from satellites 23,000 miles out in space in order to find the nearest pub!

But isn't it sad that the current generation laments how wasteful we old folks were just because we didn't have the "green thing" back then?

We don't like being old in the first place, so it doesn't take much to upset us especially when the "advice" is being offered by a tattooed, multiple pierced smart-arse who can't work out the change without the cash register telling them how much it is!

(Sent in by John Stallard)

History Lesson

There is an old Hotel/Pub in Marble Arch, London, which used to have gallows adjacent to it. Prisoners were taken to the gallows (after a fair trial of course) to be hung.

The horse-drawn dray, carting the prisoner, was accompanied by an armed guard, who would stop the dray outside the pub and ask the prisoner if he would like "ONE LAST DRINK".

If he said YES, it was referred to as ONE FOR THE ROAD.

If he declined, that prisoner was ON THE WAGON.

So there you go. More bleeding history.

They used to use urine to tan animal skins, so families used to all pee in a pot and then once a day it was taken and sold to the tannery. If you had to do this to survive you were "piss poor", but worse than that were the really poor folk, who couldn't even afford to buy a pot, they "Didn't have a pot to piss in" and were the lowest of the low.

The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be in England. Here are some facts about the 1500s:

Most people got married in June, because they took their yearly bath in May and they still smelled pretty good by June. However, since they were starting to smell, brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odour. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women, and finally the children. Last of all the babies.

By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it.

Hence the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water!"

Houses had thatched roofs, thick straw piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof.

Hence the saying "It's raining cats and dogs."

There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom, where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That's how canopy beds came into existence.

The floor was dirt.. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt.

Hence the saying, "dirt poor."

The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on they added more thresh until, when you opened the door, it would all

start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entrance-way.
Hence: a thresh hold.

(Getting quite an education, aren't you?)

In those old days, they cooked in the kitchen with a big kettle that always hung over the fire. Every day they lit the fire and added things to the pot. They ate mostly vegetables and did not get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight, then start over the next day. Sometimes stew had food in it that had been there for quite a while.
Hence the rhyme: "Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in the pot, nine days old".

Sometimes they could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special. When visitors came over they would hang up their bacon, to show off. It was a sign of wealth that a man could, "Bring home the bacon."
They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around talking and "chew the fat".

Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the lead to leach onto the food, causing lead poisoning and death. This happened most often with tomatoes, so for the next 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous.

Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or "The Upper Crust".

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days (dead drunk ?). Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up.
Hence the custom of "Holding a Wake".

England is old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people, so they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a bone-house and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realised they had been burying people alive. So they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, thread it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the graveyard shift) to listen for the bell; thus someone could be, "Saved by the Bell" or was considered a "Dead Ringer".

And that's the truth. Now, whoever said history was boring !!!
So . . . get out there and educate someone !!!

From Jill Woolford



Six Of The Best

Reviews of Square Dance releases
from other labels by

PAUL BRISTOW

(owner and producer of STING & SNOW records)



Stay Young ~ Wade Driver, Gary Shoemake

Rhythm RR 410 (Original Artist: Don Williams)

This is a song from Don Williams' 1983 album: "Yellow Moon", written by Graham Lyle and Benny Gallagher, it was released as a single and achieved the number one spot in the US Country Charts. The sentiment of the song is given by the title; just simple advice to hold on to a "young at heart" philosophy for as long as you can. Excellent music featuring first class instrumentation, together with a well produced vocal track!

Mainstream Figure: *Promenade Half, Pass the Ocean, Extend, Swing Thru Boys Run, Bend the Line, Reverse Flutterwheel, Dixie Style, Boys Cross Fold.*

I Wanna go back ~ Ted Lizotte

Arrowhead ARROW 1148 (Original Artists: Billy Satellite, Eddie Money)

A 1984 song by American Rock Band: "Billy Satellite" - written by band members Monty Byrom, Danny Chauncey, and Ira Walker. A new version of the track was recorded - in 1986 - by Eddie Money, this used more Guitar and added a Saxophone to "beef up" the sound. Arrowhead have used the Eddie Money styling, to create a very faithful copy of the sound - capturing the styling of the original - with Ted Lizotte providing the vocal!

Mainstream Figure: *ending: Extend, Swing Thru Boys Run, Bend the Line, Right and Left Thru, Dixie Style, Girls Circulate, Allemande Left, Promenade.*

Smoke Gets in your Eyes ~ Chris Froggatt

Knee Deep KDM 138 (Original Artist - in the 1933 show: Tamara Drasin)

A show tune, written by Jerome Kern together with lyricist Otto Harbach, for the 1933 musical "Roberta"; the first recording - featuring Gertrude Niesen - was released in the same year. The first "hit" recording was cut by Paul Whiteman in 1934. "The Platters" also recorded a version of the song, in 1959 and reached number 1. This Square Dance version feels great - and sounds marvellous; Chris does his usual great job on the vocal!

Mainstream Figure: *starting: Heads Promenade Halfway, Sides Touch a Quarter Walk and Dodge, Swing Thru, Girls Circulate, Boys Trade, Boys Run.*

Silver Bells ~ Dan Nordbye, Ken Bower, Carol Hilliard (Reardon)

Riverboat RIV 1036 (Original Artist: William Frawley)

This popular Christmas song, composed by Jay Livingston and Ray Evans, was first sung by William Frawley but soon became better known for the recordings by Bob Hope (with Marilyn Maxwell) and Bing Crosby (with Carol Richards); the Bob Hope version appeared in the film: "The Lemon Drop Kid" 1950. This is a really fine version of the - tune that is suitable for inclusion in any Christmas Dance programme; it has an outstanding vocal!

Mainstream Figure: *Heads Square Thru, Right Hand Star, Heads Star Left Right and Left Thru, Pass to the Centre, Square Thru Three and Swing.*

Wonderful Life ~ Christian Sorge

SharpShooter SS 1062 (Original Artist: Hurts)

From their debut album: "Happiness", this is a song by English Synthpop duo "Hurts"; it was released as their debut single, in Denmark, in 2010 and enjoyed a lot of popularity in most European music charts. The lyrics of the song tell about a man, saved by a girl, from making the biggest mistake of his life... The Chorus is a real "earworm" (it will be hard to get out of your head); top notch music - with a terrific vocal from Christian!

Mainstream Figure: Heads Promenade Halfway, Sides Right and Left Thru Heads Square Thru Four, Do Sa Do, Eight Chain Four, Swing, Promenade.

Set Your House in Order ~ Tommy Russell

Solid Gold SG 1034 (Original Artist: Gordon Mote)

This is a Gospel tune, written by Robert Kent McKee that appeared on the 2018 album: "Love, Love, Love" by Gordon Mote (featuring "The Oakridge Boys"); the lyrical tag line on each of the parts is: "Set your house in order for the coming of the Lord" - and that tells you what the song is all about. There is some excellent Gospel music being played on this track, which offers a great rhythmic feel - supported by Tommy Russell's vocal!

Mainstream Figure: Heads Touch a Quarter, Boys Run, Right and Left Thru Swing Thru, Spin the Top, Right and Left Thru, Pass the Ocean, Boys Run.

Hear and buy all the newest Square Dance releases - by "clicking" on "Recent Additions" at:

www.musicforcallers.com



web-site - web-site

STING PRODUCTIONS AMBASSADOR CLUB

PRODUCING MUSIC FOR DISTRIBUTION BY:

STING & SNOW RECORDS

www.stingproductions.co.uk



web-site - web-site

November **STING RECORDS** Releases:

(Originally included on the 2018 Edition of the Sting Productions Ambassador Club)

STING 21805 Colour My World (Vocal: Mike Davey)

(1966 Petula Clark song - from the album by the same name - by Tony Hatch and Jackie Trent)

STING 21818 What's Another Year (Vocal: Maarten Weijers)

(Ireland's 1980 Eurovision Song Contest winner, sung by Johnny Logan, written by Shay Healy)

STING 21804 Colour Me In (Vocal: Uli Schingen)

(A tune from the 2011 "Platinum" album: "Can't Stand the Silence: The Encore" by Rea Garvey)

Buy MP3s - "Bulk-Buy" options - via the Web-Site/Shop

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UNDERSTANDING CAST OFF 3/4

Everyone knows how to do the combination of: Centers In - Cast Off 3/4. But how many dancers can do only the Cast Off 3/4 without the preceding Centers In? It is surprising the number who can not do this.

Near the end of many of my Mainstream and Plus dances will put the dancers in lines facing out and call: " Cast Off 3/4." The correct ending formation is lines facing in, but it is surprising the number of dancers who finish in lines facing out. Many of them are already leaning in anticipation of doing a Wheel & Deal, so they just move in that direction.



I joke with the crowd and make a fun thing out of it, but it is amazing the number of people who approach me later and say: "How do you do Cast Off 3/4 from lines?" Here is the amazingly simple answer.

From any line of 4, which can mean all dancers facing one way, two-faced lines, 3&1 lines or waves. CENTERS WALK FORWARD.

That's it. Remember that rule and you will not break down.

INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES

"If you can dream it, you can do it." ...Walt Disney

"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are." ...Theodore Roosevelt

"Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you're right."
...Henry Ford

"What you do today can improve all your tomorrows." ...Ralph Marston

"The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be." ...Ralph Waldo Emerson

(from the collection of Ed Foote)

In the Footsteps of JMW Turner

The North West Birthdays Weekend in October 2019 with Paul Bristow, Terry McCann, Di Green and Trevor Day calling was an excellent Birthday Weekend event hosted by the friendly Lune Valley Ocean Wavers and Chain Reaction Clubs. My wife and I enjoyed the dancing and have happy memories of the weekend.

During the break in dancing we visited the nearby Crook O' Lune which gives you the surprising opportunity to step back nearly 200 years into the footsteps of Joseph Mallord William Turner who painted his masterpiece 'The Crook of Lune' circa 1820. The view that Turner beheld and painted all those years ago is still as magnificent and inspiring. The painting is available to view on the Tate Gallery website.



We are hoping to return to the Northwest and Lakes Weekend in October 2021 and also retrace the footsteps of J M W Turner.

Nick Tillotson White Rose Squares

Answers to Koli's Kriptic Kwiz #1 (P 15)

1. Pass the ocean
2. Cut the diamond
3. Zoom
4. Crossfire
5. Grand Square

Caller's Corner

by **PAUL BRISTOW**
(CALLERLAB Accredited Caller Coach)

"I could never be a Caller... - I can't sing" (or maybe - "I sing too well...")!

When people make this statement - in most cases it is given as a simple response to the question: "why don't you have a go at Calling" - and most times it really disguises the fact that the person in question has no interest in leaving the dance floor. However, in a few circumstances the response comes from a person who is interested in Calling - but feels that their singing ability is the thing that holds them back...

The fact is that you do not need to be able to sing to be a Caller; on Singing Calls a singing voice can be useful and the delivery of Calls on a Patter has to be rhythmical - but not in any other degree musical. When I am asked to explain how a person who cannot sing, could be a Caller, I usually make reference to Rex Harrison, a successful actor who believed he could not sing - and didn't even try. When Lerner and Loewe wrote the musical "My Fair Lady" they approached Rex to play the leading role; he said if - rather than singing - he could speak the words of the song rhythmically (in the style of Noel Coward) that would be the best he could do, they accepted this and very quickly proved that it would work. When Rex was asked to appear in the film version he said: "in all his stage performances, he had never talked his way through the songs the same way twice and thus could not convincingly lip-sync to a playback during filming"; as a result Warner Brothers' sound department won an Academy Award for developing the wireless microphone to make the film! Rex Harrison won awards for his role in the live musical performances, as well as his appearance in the film. He also appeared in other musicals but - whenever he appeared in such roles - he used a musical intonation which was rhythmical and effective; quite close to "chanting" - but nowhere near as mundane.

When I speak with people who are interested in Calling - but don't think they could sing well enough, I often refer them to this story and hope that they will find a way to work with the music that is effective but does not rely upon being able to sing "operatically".

The greater problem is much more likely to be for the person who can sing and has a trained voice. Calls must be delivered as instructions - for the most part they need to be spoken, not sung; a person with a trained voice could find it difficult to work as a Caller. The most effective way to determine whether you have found the right balance between Calls and music is by recording your efforts - and then listening back to it - to ensure that all the Calls are clear and the musical aspects are not too "difficult" to listen to. If you have the "trained voice" problem, listen to my daughter Cherish; she sings opera/show-tunes etc. and had to work very hard to develop a method that allows her to record Singing Calls - without too much "singing" - but with clarity on the Square Dance Calls.

Concluded on next page

You can listen to any of her recordings (on the Sting website), to be able to hear this; her most recent recording "Moon River" is an excellent example.

Keep in mind that the majority of Singing Calls play the lead music (i.e. the Melody), if you can find that and - sing along with it - you stand a good chance of keeping in tune. The most important thing to remember is - if you can't sing (or if you sing too well) - you should be able to still find a way to put what you can do, to the music!

Covid Poem

I'm normally a social girl, I love to meet my mates
But lately with the virus here We can't go out the gates
You see, we are "oldies" now, We need to stay inside
If they haven't seen us for a while They'll think we've upped and died.
They'll never know the things we did Before we got this old
There wasn't any Facebook So not everything was told
We may seem sweet old ladies Who would never be uncouth
But we grew up in the Sixties - If you only knew the truth!
There was sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll, The pill and miniskirts
We smoked, we drank, we partied, And were quite outrageous flirts
Then we settled down, got married and Turned into someone's mum,
Somebody's wife, then nana, Who on earth have we become?
We didn't mind the change of pace Because our lives were full
But to bury us before we're dead is like a red rag to a bull!
So here you find me stuck inside For four weeks, maybe more
I finally found myself again Then had to close the door!
It didn't really bother me I'd while away the hour
I'd bake for all the family But I've got no flaming flour!
Now Netflix is just wonderful I like a gutsy thriller
I'm swooning over Idris Or some random sexy lover
At least I've got a stash of booze for when I'm feeling idle
here's wine and whiskey, even gin If I'm feeling suicidal!
So let's all drink to lockdown To recovery and health
And hope this awful virus Doesn't decimate our wealth
We'll all get through the crisis And be back to join our mates
Just hoping I'm not far too wide To fit though the flaming gates!

(Pam Ayres)

Editor's note: Due to a technical error, the end of Brian's obituary was omitted in the November issue. It is repeated here in full.

Obituary ~ Brian Hitchins

After a year of bravely fighting an asbestos related cancer, Brian passed away at home on Sunday, 13th September 2020.

Brian started to learn square dancing in 2007 at Minster Squares and was taught to Plus standard by the late Andrew Short. Andrew encouraged Brian to do singing calls at the club and started to teach him to call hash. Sheila Short told Brian of the Caller School being held in Southampton in 2011 with Paul Bristow and Jerry Story teaching. They were impressed with Brian's calling at the end of the course and encouraged him to go further.



To enable him to give something back for the joy that square dancing had given him, Brian started teaching Beginners up to Plus standard on Tuesday afternoons, and this he carried on doing until the lockdown in March. During this time at teaching he was always very grateful for the tips he received from other local callers.

For the last three years and since the passing of Keith Parfoot, Brian has successfully run Priory Squares. During this short time the club has held dances to raise money for Marie Curie and Parkinson's UK.

Brian always enjoyed going away for weekends and holidays abroad, dancing at any level to any caller. We had a wonderful life together and met lovely people from all over the country and abroad. For me, life and square dancing will never be the same again.

We have a vast amount of square dance equipment, together with records, tapes and CDs. Please contact me if you are interested in anything.

Pauline Hitchins

Obituary ~ Jenny Burton, (Castle Squares)

Jenny started square dancing in 1964 , with her soon to be husband, Tony. She started at the Foot and Fiddle club. Jenny was always an enthusiastic dancer and she was always keen to become fully involved in everything she did, so it wasn't long before she joined the committee of Foot and Fiddle. She and Tony continued dancing and when Castle Squares was started by Dennis Thompson in Windsor, close to where they lived, they joined that club. Jenny didn't confine activities just dancing. She made the beautiful banner that the Castle Squares was proud to carry around to various dances. She supported Tony her husband, travelling with him to many of his calling events and always acting as his 'roadie'. As well as supporting the various clubs to which she belonged she was also a strong supporter of the British Association and for a time was its Secretary - a job that she enjoyed doing very much. Later, when she and Tony were asked if they would like to assist with organising the Grand Square International (GSI) Callers Course she was happy to do so and she and Tony became members of the UK committee of GSI. Jenny was always a lovely person to be around always cheerful and always positive. Over the last few years she had had some heart problems which have necessitated having her heart stopped and restarted several times. She passed away on 11th October after a short unrelated illness. You will be greatly missed, Jenny, and our hearts go out to Tony and his family



(Alan)

LET'S SQUARE DANCE ~ December 2020

The Council has agreed that to list all the planned dances and show them as cancelled looks depressing. So in future, we will only list newly planned dances (including Zoom dances).

OPEN DANCES ~ December 2020

Sat 5 th 2pm-2 am	Light the candles' 12 hour Zoom dance Multiple Callers (see page 32)
Every Tuesday 7.30 A1 8.45 A2	Zoom Dance Di Green A1, A2 https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85359681095?pwd=NUI0NzUxcVFOY1A1T2pmNEx4N01DQT09 Contact Di on digreen21@gmail.com
Every Friday 8 pm	Zoom Dance Di Green C1 https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85359681095?pwd=NUI0NzUxcVFOY1A1T2pmNEx4N01DQT09 Contact Di on digreen21@gmail.com
Every Saturday 8 pm except Dec 5th	Zoom Dance Kevin Lovell P https://us02web.zoom.us/j/71441264031?pwd=bVAzSIZJdzN3c2xKMzhrSDdOWXFQQT09#success (ID 714 4126 4031, Password: ASAZ-VD) Contact Kevin on kevin_lovell@hotmail.com

OPEN DANCES ~ January 2021

Every Tuesday 7.30 A1 8.45 A2	Zoom Dance Di Green A1, A2 https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85359681095?pwd=NUI0NzUxcVFOY1A1T2pmNEx4N01DQT09 Contact Di on digreen21@gmail.com
Every Friday 8 pm	Zoom Dance Di Green C1 https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85359681095?pwd=NUI0NzUxcVFOY1A1T2pmNEx4N01DQT09 Contact Di on digreen21@gmail.com
Every Saturday 8 pm	Zoom Dance Kevin Lovell P https://us02web.zoom.us/j/71441264031?pwd=bVAzSIZJdzN3c2xKMzhrSDdOWXFQQT09#success (ID 714 4126 4031, Password: ASAZ-VD) Contact Kevin on kevin_lovell@hotmail.com

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Obituaries - 20th of the month preceding the publication month. (as early as possible would be appreciated) with an accompanying photo if possible. Forward details direct to the editor (LSDmag@talktalk.net).

Free listing of open Dances - Club contacts are expected to check the events calendar on the BAASDC website (www.uksquaredancing.com) to avoid clashes and then submit details using the website's EVENT SUBMISSION FORM found under 'help' and then 'Forms' at least **TWO weeks** before the publication month.

Short letters relevant to this edition - 20th of the month preceding the publication month, direct to the editor (LSDmag@talktalk.net).

All other items including advertisements - 20th of the month preceding the publication month. Forward details direct to the editor (LSDmag@talktalk.net).

All items submitted will be reviewed and assessed for suitability for inclusion but their publication cannot be guaranteed . Authors should be aware that the editor may modify text and layout according to relevance and the space available.

ACCEPTABLE FORMATS

For text submissions - Hand written, typed or e-mail, (ODT, Rich Text or Word). Note that this publication uses Verdana 9pt font as a default.

For graphics submissions - gif, jpeg, jpg, png, tif, ppp and bmp.

Photographs should be to the highest possible resolution.

Please avoid mixing text and graphics

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Light the Candles ('round the World)

Saturday, December 5, 2020

15.00 to 03.00 GMT

*MS & PL with possible A1-A2-C1 star tips
2-Couple VSD with RDs & more!
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