

Country Dance & Song Society

# NEWS

#26

MAY GADD

1890 ~ 1979



February 9, 1979  
Saint Paul's Chapel  
Columbia University

PROGRAM

Processional  
~ *The Abbot's Bromley Horn Dance*

*The Twenty-Ninth of May*

*We'll Camp a Little While in the Wilderness*  
~ *All Sing*

*The Nutting Girl*

*From A Cup of Sun* by Joan Walsh Anglund

*Bonny at Morn*

Speaker

*The Old Mole*

*Newcastle*

Speaker

*The Lark in the Morn*

*From Psalms 149 and 150 and Romans 8*

*Ampleforth Sword Dance*

Speaker

*Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day*

*Sellenger's Round*  
~ *For as many as will*

*Wild Mountain Thyme*  
~ *All Sing*

Following are the words spoken by  
the three speakers at the Memorial  
Celebration for Gay, February 9, 1979.

Gay once told me, "I was born under Queen Victoria, but I grew up under King Edward. It doesn't matter to me what you do, so long as you're discreet." Although at the time this self-assessment seemed pretty amusing, coming as it did just a little while after Gay had called a special meeting to discuss my private life, it now seems to contain a larger truth. Born in the 19th century, she was able to escape many of the limitations of her time and place, including, in particular, class consciousness and the limitations on the roles of women. She was incredibly successful at working with a very wide variety of people, from New York high society in the early days, to the rank and file soldiers she led through Cumberland Square during World War II, to the motley assembly among which she found herself in her last years. She outlived virtually all of her contemporaries but found friends and co-conspirators among the next three generations.

We tend to forget that she had lived a very full life before she ever came to America. Gay remembered the Christmas mummers coming to her home in Sussex when she was a girl, although they were nothing special to her at the time -- just a scruffy bunch of village boys. She had already started a career as a physical education teacher when she discovered English folk dance in 1912. She was, for many years after that, one of Cecil Sharp's dance demonstrators and was among the dancers who helped him work out the dances contained in the later volumes of the Country Dance Book. She worked for two years as regional English Folk Dance Society organizer in Newcastle and spent at least one of her summer holidays in Cornwall, near the other Plymouth. When Gay arrived in America she was 38 years old, and envisioned staying here for a year or two, if she liked it.

Gay's attitude towards dance was strongly shaped by Cecil Sharp. She believed that every dance had a meaning and integrity of its own, and tried to convey this along with the steps and figures. She developed a method of explaining figures as a sequence of human interactions rather than a collection of geometric patterns. Gay insisted that the dances were for living people, not museum pieces, and did her best to make them relevant to each new generation -- in one instance, at the expense of thousands of venerable pairs of tennis shoes.

It was a great privilege to me to have worked with Gay during the last few years when she and the Country Dance and Song Society were synonymous, in the days when she would sit down at the typewriter and, without benefit of committees, notices or first drafts, write the CDSS Newsletter straight onto the mimeograph stencil. And she only allowed herself the use of one finger per hand. It was during the long lunch breaks and after hours that I was educated in dancing and dance leadership, and also learned to know and love Gay.

On more than one of these occasions we discussed life after death. Gay was a firm believer in reincarnation, and having always been frustrated by her lack of musical ability, looked forward to being able to sing and play an instrument in her next life. I hope she was right about all this. If so, we have a great new generation of musicians ahead of us, for Gay has already demonstrated that one person with ability, courage and determination can get the whole lot of us moving.

Jim Morrison



We are here today to celebrate a life dedicated to folk dancing and music. I would like to draw your attention to the insert page in your program. In Gay's own handwriting on the front of the folder is written, "This is the program that brought me into folk dancing -- my first introduction." When she was asked how she became interested in it, she always said, "I went to this performance of country and morris dances and decided then and there that this was for me." And so, in 1912, her lifelong interest and work in folk dance began.

Douglas Kennedy writes, "I first met Gay at the Cecil Sharp Summer School at Stratford-on-Avon in 1915, and vividly remember her dancing light as a feather and bright as a button." By 1917 Gay was on the English Folk Dance Society staff, working closely with Cecil Sharp and drawing her inspiration from him. Sharp of course died in 1924; it was in 1927 that Gay came to this country to work for what was at that time the New York branch of the EFDS. From then on she devoted her life to the organization; indeed in later years we used to feel that Gay was the Society!

My first personal contact with Gay was in 1940 at Pinewoods. Pinewoods means many things to many people, but I would like to try to give you a feeling of what it was almost 40 years ago. Gay and Lily Conant, with Mrs. Storrow hovering in the background, contrived in some magic fashion to create an atmosphere of elegance in that very rustic environment. Beautiful arrangements of fresh flowers stood on the mantles of the camp house and dining hall. Afternoon tea in the camp house was served by hostesses seated at a table, pouring from real tea pots into china cups and saucers. Of course, this meant a lot of washing up under very inadequate conditions and with consequent rumblings from the campers involved, but it really is no won-

der that Gay resisted to the end the idea of plastic cups and tea bags. Before camp opened she and Lily could be seen stitching curtains; they personally checked on such things as lamp shades and light bulbs. Gay cared about such amenities because she was concerned about the total environment of the summer school. She had a remarkable talent for putting people into the right accommodations; on opening days she was always on the office steps to welcome people as they came in.

All this was background for the course. I feel tremendously privileged to have had the experience of learning from people who worked with Cecil Sharp. One of my most vivid recollections of that first summer at Pinewoods was watching Gay, Lily Conant and Louise Chapin dance "Step Stately." They danced it with verve and elegance, beautifully phrased. All three were Sharp's students. Another dance that I always associate with Gay is "The Nutting Girl." She used to say, "that's my dance," and indeed, she performed it with great style. In her classes one always realized that she felt exactly how something should be done. She regarded demonstrations as a showcase for the Society. She expected high standards of performance and managed to get them from her amateur dancers, although not without anguish on their part at times. At Pinewoods she worked her demonstrators hard -- we used to rehearse every day for that Thursday performance.

It was at Pinewoods in 1961 that Douglas Kennedy presented Gay, along with four other recipients, with the Gold Badge of the EFDS for, as he writes, "We in England are as proud of her life and work as all of you, here today to honor her memory."

Gay loved Pinewoods. We are happy that she could have spent so many summers there, from 1933 through last year.

Genevieve Shimer

About 30 years ago, soon after I started dancing, I remember a discussion several of us were having about famous people who impressed us and I was quite startled when Alfie Sheinwold said one of the most remarkable persons he knew was Gay. And he began to enumerate some of the reasons for saying so, and we all agreed that she was indeed remarkable: for her tremendous knowledge, for her unswerving devotion to the cause (our cause), for her singleminded determination to make this society stay alive, and for all the other reasons why we have come together, with dance and song, to reaffirm her work. Coincidentally, 30 years ago Gay was the age I am now; and I, of course, thought of her as an old lady by then. But she got younger and younger from then on! Can you believe it -- of course you can -- that only last year she went home from one of the Tuesday dance evenings in a huff because no one had asked her to dance! This at 88 -- can you not find encouragement in that?

When we wanted to give her a birthday party, I said that on the invitation I would like to say that it was her 80th birthday; and she was uncertain because she thought people might think she was getting old.

What has always been so wonderful about the Country Dance Society has been the sense of fraternity with which it engulfed us, and that was truly personified by Gay's whole being and the way in which she ran the Society. Of course, she drove us frantic -- how many hours have we spent looking for her glasses, finding things she left behind: passports, luggage, etc. But beyond all that was always her essential good humor as she went around the dance floor coralling up the new people, placating the old ones who only wanted to do Step Stately, getting us lined up after a hasty rehearsal to enter the hall for a festival demonstration. I wonder how many of you remember the desperate time when the procession- al came in with each of us carrying

balloons on a string which had just been handed us and in the hands right and left, they all got tangled, and above our consternation we could hear Gay's laughter and her statement that, "oh well, next time the balloons will be attached to sticks and it won't happen." I remember, too, a demonstration my first year at Rockefeller Plaza when I sympathized with her about how much grousing one of the old timers had done, and she very lightly passed it over: "Oh, it's just that his feet were hurting him." There seemed to me always a sense of gentle acceptance of the adversities that beset her and the Society.

Without Gay, there would surely be no Society now. In many ways it was restricted by being so much in the hands of one person; and yet one has to admire the way in which she was able to make adjustments and changes while being steeped all the time in tradition. She eagerly embraced new waves. In the 40's when she came back from England full of the new movements towards popularization, her acceptance of the new emphasis on American dance as compared to strict interpretation- ists who want Playford only, willingness to incorporate colonial dance which was new to her and, I might add too, (Pinewoods Morris Men please don't leave) her easy acceptance of women's morris. We shouldn't overlook either the change in regulations at Pinewoods concerning who could room with whom. We know those who in their day were willing to overcome their principles and get married so they could room together at Pinewoods (see what a love of dance can do), but a year ago she could laugh at my astonishment at nude bathing in Round Pond.

When I said there would be no Country Dance Society if not for Gay, I was not only referring to the organization, I also meant that we wouldn't have had some of our greatest pleasures and our dearest friends and lovers if she hadn't used her own magic and made it possible for us to meet and dance and sing.

Although the last 5 months of



This is the 1912 program, referred to in Genny Shimer's speech. Note Gay's handwriting at the top

The traditional accompanying instrument is the pipe and tabor, commonly known as the whistle (or whiff) and ddb. Later, the whistle has been supplanted by the fiddle or concertina.

In the Sword Dance, with its elaborate dexterity of evolution, its dramatic accompaniments of song and interlude, we find drama and dance combined. Technically, it stands mid-way between the Morris Dance and the Mummering Play.

The Yorkshire dancers use metal swords, roughly forged, nearly three feet in length, but sometimes, as with the Plumborough folkmen, they use stout wooden swords of oak or ash. In Northumberland and Durham, the Gaisards—as they are called—dance with "rapiers"—i.e., small weapons of great flexibility, made of finely-tempered steel.

## THE COUNTRY DANCE.

THE Country Dance is a quieter, more reposeful dance than the Morris; it is more easily learned, and, physically, far less exacting. It is, primarily, a social recreative diversion in which both sexes take part—a homely, intimate, and, above all, a mannered dance.

The traditional Country Dance of the present day is always danced, like "Sir Roger de Coverley," in two parallel straight lines, men on one side, women on the other—i.e., in the formation known in the old dancing books as "Longways for as many as will." But this was not always so. In the old days there were the Rounds, the Squares for eight, the Longways dances for two, three or four couples. These, however, fell into disuse about the latter half of the 17th Century, and all that we know now about them is contained in one book, "Playford's English Dancing Master" (Eighteen Editions, 1650-1750). In this unique work the old Country Dance of England is described as it existed in the days of its prime, before it became contaminated by the drawing-room and the theatre.

## THE ENGLISH FOLK DANCE SOCIETY.

Although it is less than twelve months since it was founded, the English Folk Dance Society has already won some measure of public recognition. It has over 200 members, a large number of correspondents resident in different parts of the country and several Branches in the provinces. If, however, the Society is to make the most of its opportunities, to extend and properly to carry out its work, it must have an assured income and the assistance of a large number of dancers and teachers. An increased membership will satisfy both these requirements. An earnest appeal is, therefore, addressed to those who are in sympathy with the aims of the Society and with the important work it is endeavouring to accomplish, to enrol themselves as members and to induce their friends to do likewise.

## VACATION SCHOOL OF FOLK SONG AND DANCE.

The next Session will be held at Stratford-on-Avon from December 28th, 1912, to January 4th, 1913, inclusive. Applications should be addressed to the Secretary of the E.F.D.S., or to

MISS RAINBOW,  
SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE,  
STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

Printed by W. Towns to, Gough Sq., E.C.



This is the program that brought the whole folk dancing movement into existence —

## QUEEN'S THEATRE.

Sole Lessee . . . . . Mr. ALFRED BUTT.

## PROGRAMME

OF

## Folk Dances and Songs

PRESENTED BY

## The English Folk Dance Society

On SATURDAY, 7th DECEMBER, at 8.30 p.m.

1912

Hon. Director: CECIL J. SHARP.

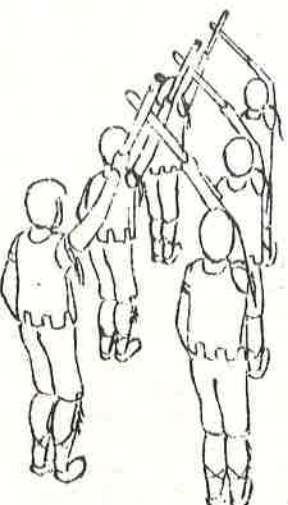
Secretary: Miss WALSH,  
11, HART STREET,  
BLOOMSBURY, W.C.

Price Twopence.

her life were really no life at all, we have to put them in the context of her 88 years. However, during these 5 months she required a lot of care and concern, and it would be proper to thank those who were so helpful during this time. Many people showed her kindness of one kind or another, but especial care was given by Celia Wakefield, Almut Roth, Rachel Meltzer, Christine and Ed Helwig, Joan Carr, John Hodgkin, Ruth Pass, Josephine Giaratano, Philip Merrill. We thank you for acting on our behalf and on behalf of her family in England. Forgive me if I've omitted anyone.

It has always seemed to me that one of the saddest and happiest moments at camp was always the time when we danced the last dance before we broke up, always Sellengers Round. It was sad because it marked the end of a glorious time, happy because it brought us all together in a big circle and reaffirmed our ties to one another. Let's push back the chairs and dance Sellengers Round together and we can here, too, be sad and happy. Sad because Gay is no longer with us, but we must be happy that she has been with us and that we have been touched by that remarkable woman. Let's dance.

Norman Singer





THE theatre is not, perhaps, an ideal place for an exhibition of folk-dances, the majority of which are intended to be danced in the open air rather than in a closed room. Nevertheless, it is the only place in which dances can be advantageously seen by a large number of people. It is not contended that a succession of dances, however beautiful each individually may be, necessarily constitutes a spectacle of a high artistic order. The aim of the English Folk Dance Society is rather, by setting a high standard of performance, to exhibit the dances in such a manner that others may be encouraged to learn and practise them, not with a view of giving public entertainments, but for the sake of the dances themselves. Indeed, it is hoped that a few years hence an exhibition such as this will be as unnecessary and uncalled for as, at the present time, would be a public demonstration of waltzes, polkas, and other drawing-room dances.

## Programme.

1. Processional Dance - - - - - Tideswell.
2. Country Dances  
My Lady Cullen } Playford's English  
Gathering Peascods } Dancing Master (1650)
3. Sword Dance - Short-Sword or Rapper - Earsdon.
4. Morris Dance - Trunkles - Oxon.
5. Folk Songs - Henry Martin } Somerset.  
William Taylor } "
6. Morris Jig - Princess Royal - Oxon.
7. Morris Dances - Processional - Oxon.  
The Rose - "  
Step back - "
8. Carols - Sons of Levi } Kent.  
As I sat on a Sunny Bank } Worcestershire.  
Wassail Song } Somerset.
9. Country Dances  
Grimstock } Playford's  
Parson's Farewell } English Dancing  
The Old Mole } Master (1650)

## INTERVAL.

10. Morris Dances - Processional - Derbyshire.  
Shepherds' Hey. - Oxon.  
The Old Woman tossed up - Warwickshire.
11. Sword Dance - Long Sword - Flamborough.
12. Country Dances  
Lull me beyond Thee } Playford's English  
The Merry Conceit } Dancing Master (1650)  
Newcastle }
13. Morris Dance - Brighton Camp - Oxon.
14. Morris Jig - I'll go and enlist for a Sailor - Gloucestershire.
15. Folk Songs - The Sign of the Bonny Blue Bell - Somerset.  
The Red Herring - "
16. Morris Dances - Constant Billy } Gloucestershire.  
Lads a-Bunchun } Gloucestershire.
17. Processional Dance - - - - - Tideswell.

## God Save the King.

Vocalists: Miss MATTIE KAY & Mr. FRED HUDSON.  
Violinist: MISS ELSIE AVRIL.

Grand Pianoforte: Messrs. COLLARD & COLLARD.

The Society's repertory from which the dances in this programme have been drawn includes 67 Morris Dances, 83 Country-Dances, and seven Sword Dances.

## THE MORRIS DANCE.

THERE are three varieties of the Morris Dance: (1) the Morris Dance proper of the Midlands; (2) the Sword Dance of Yorkshire, Durham, and Northumberland; and (3) the Mummers' Play, common to every part of the country.

The origin of the Morris Dance may be traced to the ancient ceremonies associated with the Seasonal Festivals of primitive man. Originally expressions of religious belief, in which the idea was as essential as the form, these ceremonies have, in the course of ages, been transformed into the inspiring dances with which we are familiar.

The Morris Dance is characterised by a robust energy and forcefulness. It is not, in the ordinary sense, an elegant dance; it has none of the graceful poses or studied poses of the dances of the theatre or polite society. On the other hand, to dance the Morris ungracefully is to destroy its vigour and its beauty. The Morris dancer is not left on the mind of those who have seen the dance performed in country places is one first of beauty, and high excitement, then of vigour—plenty of brisk but no excitement. It is a traditional dance once put it. It is a professional dance, performed by picked men specially trained for the purpose. Its function was to provide a spectacle or pageant on Whit-Monday and other popular festivals and holidays.

## CDSS NEWS

505 Eighth Ave.

New York, N.Y. 10018

## NEWSLETTER STAFF

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
FEATURES EDITOR  
TYPING & PASTE-UP  
CALLIGRAPHY & ART

JERRY EPSTEIN  
HANNY BUDNICK  
SUE KIRSHNER  
ROBIN SIEGEL  
GIL SANTIAGO  
KATHY LOGUE

How does one editorialize about someone like Gay? She and her Society have altered so many lives that the temptation to make her larger than life is great -- and unnecessary. I met Gay -- and CDSS -- in 1965, when I stumbled, more or less by chance, into Folk Music Week (that was back when there was plenty of room!). It was, as with so many others, a turning point of my life. Others, many who knew Gay far more closely and far longer than I did, have written eloquently elsewhere in this issue about her great work. It is a particular human side of her character that I wish to remember here. Speaking of a person's fears, needs and shortcomings, in my opinion, in no way diminishes a person's stature, and it adds to the humanity. For better and worse, Gay was an extraordinary, and very human, person.

For most of the last fourteen years, I knew Gay through Folk Music Week and through the Pinewoods Folk Music Club. My strong involvement with the dance side of CDSS is much more recent. The Society was Gay's whole life, and she identified herself with it. This was often a great strength but also a mixed blessing. It was very difficult, because of her total personal investment, for Gay to be objective about anything regarding the Society and its mission. There were aspects of the folk revival (in both dance and song) that Gay did not understand and by which she felt that the Society was threatened. It is remarkable indeed, especially considering the times and background from which she came, how much diverse tradition Gay was able to accept into the Society's fold. I think we cannot fault her too much that there were things she never understood, and against which she was sometimes belligerent, particularly when she perceived what she thought was a threat to the Society's standards, its quality, reputation or finances. The Society was her life.



The office, under Gay, supported the founding of the Folk Music Club, but it is no secret that relations were often very strained. Gay, understandably, could not accept and felt threatened by those in the Club who could see no relation between folk music and dance, didn't like dance, saw no reason to give money or support to "those people", and wished the Club to become independent of CDSS. She was afraid one of her children would abandon her.

While her fear was understandable, her reaction was all too often such as to strengthen that minority faction. I remember a painful scene in Gay's apartment, many years ago, when a few folk music people asked to meet with some CDSS people, in addition to Gay, in an effort to resolve some problems without a split. An agreement by one Executive Committee member that some Folk Club complaint might have some validity caused Gay to break into tears at having been "betrayed by my own officer".

I should add that for a long time most of the CDSS hard-core looked at the Folk Music crowd as "those people", as well as the other way round. We have all come a long way.

While it is true that life was not physically difficult for Gay until after this past summer, retirement was very difficult for her emotionally. Again, because of her great devotion, she became enraged when she thought that anyone working in the Society might lower the standards, might corrupt, weaken or destroy the Society which she had built up for 50 years.

In recent years she latched on to me (and others, I'm sure) as a confidant, often complaining to me on Tuesday nights or at Pinewoods about "those people" (now meaning those making decisions for CDSS) who wouldn't let her teach, who wouldn't take her advice, who were corrupting the standards, etc.

During Dance Week last summer, she said to me at one point, feeling particularly frustrated, "I know the Folk Music Week people will want me to teach, won't they? I love teaching at Folk Music Week". She seemed to feel that the dance people had gotten too snooty and no longer needed her, but at Folk Music Week she would be still appreciated.

Later that same week, passing the office, Gay stopped me in a fury about what she was hearing from C#: "What's the matter with that man! (a certain staff teacher) All that stamping! What has happened to the grace and style? They're killing it!" This was said about six inches from my nose.

I said something like (as many others must have said to her): "Gay, people have been dancing for hundreds of years. No one teacher can kill the tradition, it's too strong. The people will always keep what's good and change it according to their needs. Because of your work, there are thousands of people dancing; no one person can determine how they will do it."

She thought for a moment, and a little smile crossed her face that I hadn't seen for some time, and she said: "You know, it's true. If you read the old books, they were always complaining about how the new styles were ruining things...I guess it will be all right..." She giggled that giggle that was more intrinsically Gay than any other word or gesture. I had the feeling that, perhaps, at that moment she accepted that her work was done. It was soon after that that her stroke occurred.

I was at one end of the Camphouse porch, waiting for lunch, when Gay came over, all wrought up, from the other end of the porch. She was upset and was making sounds, but no words were coming out. She thought she was speaking, but there were no words. I walked over to the other end of the porch and asked the people there what Gay had said: "O she was just complaining about people staying in the water when it was lunchtime." I asked if she was speaking clearly, and they said that she was.

She had had a stroke while walking from one end of the porch to the other. It was the beginning of the end.

- Jerry Epstein

## Remembrances~

I first met Gay at the Cecil Sharp Summer School at Stratford, in England in August 1915 and vividly remember her dancing light as a feather and looking as bright as a button.

By 1917 she was on the EFDS staff. After Cecil Sharp's death in 1924 some of his American students decided to revive the summer school he had directed at Amherst, Mass. during his war-time visit. They invited Maud and Helen and myself to come from England as a nucleus of teaching staff and to bring another teacher who would be prepared to stay on in the States, as Lily Conant and Marjorie Barnett had done earlier. Gay was chosen and we four voyaged over in 1927 on the Aquitania.

After the Summer School Gay began her remarkable folk dance career working from New York with the various persons and groups inspired earlier by Sharp and Maud.

Gay flung herself into her work with unflagging energy and resourcefulness. These Amherst Summer Schools continued until 1933 when Mrs. J. J. Storrow invited the School to her Pinewoods Camp at Long Pond. Where it has continued to the present day.

In 1937 the separate New York and Boston Branches of the EFDSS were merged with the groups into a National Society with its headquarters in New York and Gay was appointed its National Director.

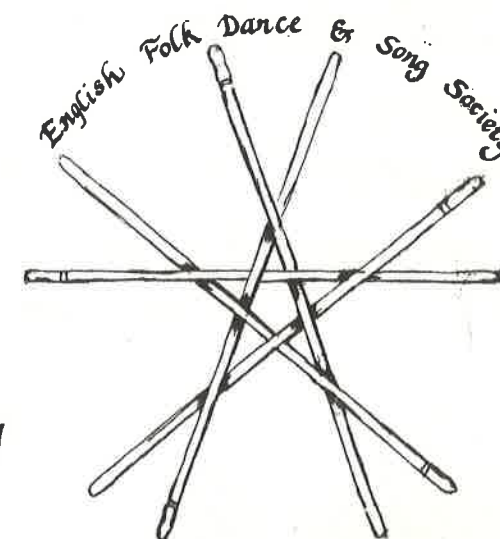
In 1939 at the request of the National Society Gay arranged for me to undertake a tour of the groups and centers and report. One result of this experience was the adoption of a new name for the Society emphasising

its American complexion. In 1940 this was adopted as The Country Dance Society, Inc. Gay and the C.D.S. working now under war conditions kept going until 1943 when she was given leave in 1943 to join the U.S.O. In a smart new uniform she continued with her folk dance work with added zest and on a much wider scale. In 1946 she was released by the U.S.O. to return full time to the C.D.S. and early in 1947 came at my invitation to England to join, and exchange experiences with the English Staff, all eager to 'recharge their batteries'.

When rested and refreshed she resumed with the C.D.S. Her war time experiences had widened her ideas and so began the most fruitful years of her life.

In 1961 I was charged by the Society in England to visit the C.D.S. and present Gay with the Society's Gold Badge, for we in England are as proud of her life and work as all of you, here today to honor her memory.

Douglas Kennedy



Our aunt, May Gadd, was born 88 years ago not far from the farm in Sussex, England, which her grandfather owned as his forebears had for over 400 years (now it is run by her cousin).

Wherever our aunt went, her friendly, interesting and sparkling personality meant that she made lasting friendships.

Her periodic trips to England, always in late spring and early summer, were geared so that she was back in the U.S.A. for the camp, which was so dear to her heart.

Aunt May's stays here were occupied spending time with her relatives and old friends, many connected with the English Folk Dance Society.

These visits were intermixed with her attendances at folk dance festivals and teaching seminars, to keep in touch with the 'grass roots'.

Our Aunt's visits to us were all too infrequent, but always anticipated with pleasure.

That our lives will now be deprived of these visits is a sorrow to us all.

We are sure that the society for which she worked and retained her interest for over fifty years will expand and flourish under the aegis of her successors.

Betty Fogden Headicar

May Gadd in 1936.

S-12

To the Executive Committee and Dancers:

The New York Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society wishes to extend its sincere condolences at the loss of your leader, May Gadd. Her passing will be a great loss to all the dancers who knew her and were inspired by her leadership and her dedication.

In the Society of Scottish Dancers we will keenly remember her encouragement of rapport between both groups. We, as an organization and as individual dancers, will miss her.

Freddy Sverdløve, Secretary  
Royal Scottish Country Dance Soc.  
New York Branch



May Gadd had her doubts about working with my "children's group" in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. She graciously received four of them (along with two of us adults) in 1969 at Pinewoods and had a chance to work with several of us briefly in a workshop session at the 1969 National Folk Festival in Knoxville, Tennessee. But, to get her to come to our town for workshops took some persuasion.

We tied our sessions here in 1974 into the meetings, also here - at Middle Tennessee State University - of the Tennessee Association of Dance. Were we excited to have her in Murfreesboro!! We planned carefully for the most efficient use of the few days she would be with us. All the mothers made their special dishes and brought them into the home of Mary Stroop, assistant director of our company, where Gay stayed then and on her subsequent visits. We had training sessions each morning, afternoon and evening. With good meals and snacks (Gay wanted "biscuits" and bourbon!), socializing, a performance showing what we'd learned for delegates to the Tennessee Association of Dance, a grand dinner and speeches as the weekend ended, it was over almost before it began! But, what memories! And how proud we were of what had happened.

We were happy to see Gay again that year. We were invited to spend the day at Pinewoods during a performing tour of New England in August. To show our dancers the camp - to see them renew acquaintance with Gay - such a fine opportunity!

As we planned for Gay's visit in 1975, she and I both knew more of what to expect. She had come to appreciate

the young people she had worked with in Murfreesboro. They had "learned quickly" and were eager to listen to her. She knew we were a "social group" and brought her long dress for the get-togethers. We had come to realize, too, the value of our association with May Gadd. To have her teach us dances that she had performed throughout Europe as a member of Cecil Sharp's group - to hear her tell of when she had first seen a certain dance performed in an English village or during a demonstration in London - to dance with her - to see her show just how the "body must move and the feet will follow" - to see her bright smile and hear her say, "Let's dance, shall we?" - to hear her instructions to join hands and "feel" the other dancers in the circle! We could hardly wait for her to arrive.

A reception the first evening of that visit brought together our dancers, their families and friends and many other specially-invited guests. Our governor proclaimed her an "Honorary Citizen of the State of Tennessee"; our county judge proclaimed "May Gadd Day" in Rutherford County; the mayors of the three cities in our county presented keys to the cities and honorary citizenships. The Trans-Atlantic Brides and Parents' Association (all British ladies) held a tea for her. A final banquet concluded a wonderful weekend of teaching, learning and fellowship.

Then, how lucky we were to see Gay again as we performed about two weeks later at the Central Florida Fair. She was visiting friends there in Orlando and came over to see the show. The English dances she had taught us were, we knew, just the ones needed to give

S-13



depth to the story we tell of the development of Appalachian Mountain dances and Tennessee Singing Games in our region. Her compliments after we used the "Flamborough Sword Dance", a long stick morris to "Beaux of London City", "Newcastle", "Nonesuch", and others we had learned during her workshop sessions meant more than an invitation from the President!

Most precious of all in our memory, however, are the ten days Gay spent here last March. We understood, she and I, that the sessions could not be as frequent ("Wouldn't you want a younger person," she laughed. "I've been ill, but I am fine now!") We knew she needed more rest, but how fortunate to have her come again! Such spirit! Such energy! Such a living heritage! Her memory so quick! We arranged several interviews for her with the press. wanted everyone to meet her who hadn't and those who had to see her again. How she entertained them all! Mrs. Stroop and I talked with her late into each night, trying to hold back the time - trying to ask all the questions we could and savor each response - each expression. Once again, new dances to be taught and learned, among them her beloved "Old Mole". She looked forward now to these "young ones". Older dancers greeted their teacher, happy as young folks usually are, enjoying someone they liked and respected. Again, the socials - from house to house - a concluding banquet - the traditional speech from Gay, praising us - encouraging us - thanking us.

Prolonged farewells could not hold Gay. She was off to New York full of plans for the time ahead. A special

celebration for a retiring co-worker - more money-raising for Pinewoods - signing a new, three-year lease on her apartment - defying time itself!

She's gone from us; never again her workshops in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. But, as long as one of the hundreds of young people with whom she's worked here remembers her - appreciates a dance or a dancer - smiles at hearing a British accent - or hums a sprightly tune.... As long as there is a performance presented by our dancers or dancers trained by one of our dancers, May Gadd's influence will continue.

Do those who have met her here know the full impact of what she is - what she has been? Perhaps many do not. They do know, however, that their lives have been touched by one who has made them happier - more aware of part of their heritage - more alive!

May Gadd has left real "footprints on the sands of time". No person is more thankful for having seen her leave some of them than I!

Steve Cates, Director  
The Rutherford County Square Dancers  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee  
February 13, 1979

My memories of Gay go back so far. I remember being taken over to Pinewoods one summer night from family's house across Long Pond. must have been all of 10 years old. Gay came over to greet my mother and suddenly I was in the middle of a set, with Gay as my partner! I remember feeling as if she already knew me. In truth, I had probably been introduced to her around Pinewoods or in New York earlier, but I sure didn't remember, and she did. I must have done okay in the dance because everyone was smiling at the end.

Five years later I went to work for the Conants at Pinewoods, sling-ing garbage cans and having a wonderful time. Gay was the first to arrive at camp, having driven all the way from New York City by herself in her marvelous old green Nash Rambler. She was also the last to leave, heading for Nantucket for a visit with Donn Tighlmann. I would marvel at her independence and tenacity.

One time, when preparations were being made for a demonstration in C#, Gay came up to me and said, "Hank, you must be our Fool." It sounded interesting and I accepted. There was really no choice; she seemed once again to know me better than I knew myself. That first demonstration was unforgettable. I honestly did not know morris, and I just smiled a lot and stayed out of the way. At the end I felt so elated and did not know why. Somehow, Gay knew that I had to be shown the morris magic. I have learned more morris since, and I have not stopped fooling. I credit Gay with showing me a side of myself which is a deep part of me to this day.

I'll never complain about hanging curtains with her in the Square cabins again.

Henry Chapin

It's now about a quarter of a century since we met May Gadd.

We'd heard of her before that from Reuben and Violet Merchant, our dance teachers in Pittsfield, and read about her in the New Yorker article of February 7, 1953 by Angelica Gibbs. But actually meeting her in person was something else! And ever since, she and the Country Dance Society have been an important element in our lives.

Her charisma attracted not only dancers but also workers. Down through the years the Society survived because of the skilled and devoted volunteers who performed all kinds of tasks to keep it going; many are still on the job, of course.

She had the kind of authority as a teacher which came from having complete command of her material.

And she had the total unflap-pability of a well-bred Englishwoman, as many of us can testify who have been through emergencies of one sort or another in her company. (We agreed, some of us chatting at table in the dining hall at Pinewoods one day, that probably if a lion should come rushing out of the woods, Gay would meet him at the steps and say, in her best calm nanny tone of voice, "I'm sorry, animals are not allowed in the dining hall. You'll have to wait outside until we've finished," and that lion would then slink away with his tail between his legs.

If there was magic in the dances we did, we felt a lot of it came from her.

We shall not see her like again, true; But we who knew her will never forget May Gadd.

Frank and Joy Van Cleef



Frank and I met Gay in August of 1956 when we went to Pinewoods for the first time. When we arrived, there was May Gadd --Gay, the inimitable --in charge of every thing and making it all work. Her bright eyes, her quick step, her crisp English accent seemed to provide a framework for everything that happened at Pinewoods in those years. I remember so well those first Sunday evenings in Camp House when Gay would set forth the rules by which we were all to live during our stay --including 'the buddy system' for swimming and boating --a term that seemed so alien to her accent that it was funny but somehow delightful.

As Gay so often told us, in 1927 she let Cecil Sharp persuade her to come to the States for a year, to work with the American branch of the English Dance and Song Society, and here, to our great good fortune, she remained --to reshape the

'branch' into the Country Dance and Song Society of America, to awaken untold numbers of people to the joy of dancing and to the fascination of tradition in both dance and song. I wonder how many remember that in addition to running Pinewoods and her duties throughout the year as Director of the Society, she was the sole editor of Country Dancer, the Society's magazine, which came out three times a year. We have a few back copies in our files and they are remarkable --full of news and information, and of interesting articles and photographs.

In May of 1975 Frank and I went to Carl Hiller's for Gay's 85th birthday party. Driving in on the Long Island Expressway we put together a song for the occasion to the tune of "Villikens and his Dinah," (Sweet Betsy from Pike). Frank sang it at the party, as the early songsters say, "to great applause."

#### May Day, 1975

In Merry Old England on the fourteenth of May  
There was an occurrence we honor today  
With pipe and with tabor, with song, dance and drum  
From every direction the celebrants come!

Hoodle dang fol de dido  
Hoodle dang fol de day.

On the day that we've mentioned a lassie was born  
There were sheep in the meadow and cows in the corn;  
We're sure there were contras and morris and play-  
parties, to welcome the arrival of Gay!

Hoodle dang fol de dido  
Hoodle dang fol de day.

So hurray for the very fortuitous chance  
That brought Gay over here, from England (near France)  
To lead us and cheer us and make our hearts gay...  
Let us all drink a toast to the fourteenth of May!

Hoodle dang fol de dido  
Hoodle dang fol de day.

I remember so many parties in Gay's attractive Village apartments --first on Barrow Street --when we, too, were living in the Village, on West 12th --and then on Bleecker. The last time was in 1976 when Douglas Kennedy was here. A sidelight: Gay and I shared an interest in English mystery stories, and I can see now the paperbacks on her bookshelves that revealed this unexpected facet of her character.

For all Gay's friendliness, one was usually conscious of her English reserve, so when Frank died just a year ago the note I had from her touched me deeply. All the barriers seemed down:

Dearest Anne,

I have just heard that darling Frank's life in our world has come to an end...I am so very sorry not to see him again. I know that you are having a very sad time...I hope that you will come in to see me later on.

So much love,  
Gay

Frank and I loved and admired Gay. As I think of her now I realize that few people are able to leave behind such a growing and living legacy as Gay has left in the Society. I am proud of her, and grateful to her.

--Anne Warner



Telegram  
Regret cannot attend Gay's service.  
Immeasurably grateful for her life and work.

Jean Hann

Deepest sympathy from Executive Committee staff members of EFDSS. Also from Nibs and Jean.

Matthews

Betty and I regret we shall be unable to attend the memorial service for Gay. Certainly her legacy is an enormous one and we are all in debt to her. I'm sure everyone feels an era has passed with her.

It is hard to believe that Gay's heart attack came last summer at camp. I took her as my partner in The Phoenix in Genny's class and she was a fine one. Not quite spry enough to get all the way home in the circles, but absolutely unerring about where she and all the rest of us should be, without saying a word, still keeping everything clear, and us out of the middle.

Almost thirty years have gone by since we first met Gay, a time in which we married, had children and saw them grow to adulthood. She had come to seem indestructible.

Albert Blank

Pat Tanin of Leafield told me of the death of May Gadd. We have all suffered a great loss. English dancing won't be the same without her wonderful spirit. How fortunate we were to have her as long as we did!

Alice B. Nugent

Douglas Kennedy, with those to whom he had just awarded the Gold Badge of the EFDSS, at Pinewoods, 1961.

- Last summer at Pinewoods during the request evening, a very simple and slow-moving dance was called. As I and the others in my set com-plainingly performed it, the thought - the feeling - came to me that May Gadd had requested it. I looked to the set behind and saw I was right. She was dancing and radiant.

- May at the snare drum, totally into herself, doing exactly what she wanted. Nothing is better than that!

- May calling "Upon A Summer's Day." Such a good caller - beautifully brief and simple. Her pleasure and joy in dancing were contagious.

- A brief exchange at the band stand as I was dancing and feeling just great: May: "You dance very nicely." I felt that and replied, "I really like you." I got a lot from her.

- I felt during the week at Pinewoods that she would not live much longer and when she was not at the Christmas Ball, I knew I was right. Now she's dead and I'll never have the pleasure of seeing her again and there's nothing I can do but feel that and miss her.

Norma Schultz



Gay in 1961



Gay in 1977

It was due to Gay (and Kattles and Elsie) that I came to America and spent 2 such happy years. The highlight was always my visit to Pinewoods which I enjoyed four times. I consider myself very lucky. I'll always remember Gay talking about traditional happenings and the beginning of Mr. Sharp's revival movement, often on the first evening of camp. She made it live as though it was all in the present and in - deed it really was, carried on by people like Gay.

Eileen Gunnell

S-18

Thinking about Gay, as I often do, one little scene comes to my mind which I think, typifies so much what she meant to us all.

One Tuesday dance night (Tuesday was always dance night for Abe and me) as I entered the small room where we left our coats, I was greeted by the following sight:

Three very tall, very young men (in their late teens or early 20's) were sitting most comfortably. "Lounging" or "sprawling" would describe them better. Before them was Gay. By this time she had passed her eightieth birthday. I believe it was also not very long after she had undergone a serious internal operation.

Gay was not sitting. Instead, she was literally bouncing back and forth, back and forth, across the room many times, beautifully demonstrating an extremely active Morris step. Her back was straight, her head erect, and she was speaking all the while.

This lovely little scene told me so much about Gay.

I think it showed her love of Morris Dancing, her interest in and wonderful rapport with young people. Her energy, drive, and the beauty of movement. Her wish to have dances performed correctly and in the right spirit. The teacher that she was. And her patience, concern, and ability to concentrate on giving so much of herself to these three interested young people.

If it were not for Gay, my husband and I would not have had so much pleasure and fun together. We also found many good friends at CDSS. The Country Dance & Song Society, incidentally, also introduced me to the recorder and chamber music which today give me a focus in life and afford me so many hours (also weekends and weeks) of pleasure.

Thank you, Gay.

Ruth Pass

I am sorry that I will not be free to attend May Gadd's Memorial Service. I send my support and love at all those who gather to honor and remember this great lady.

During the dance I called at Hendrie Hall, February 3rd, Sue Day of RSCDS made a lovely announcement. Sue explained without exaggeration, that Gay was largely responsible for our dancing together that night.

There were several of us who felt that the whole evening was dedicated to Gay. Lucy Heath and I, two local, New Haven callers, both learned to country dance like so many others, under the magnificent May. We will never forget our first and most important English Country Dance Master.

New Haven is a better place to live for us because of May Gadd and what she taught us.

David Lindsay



Douglas Kennedy and May Gadd

S-19



I first met May Gadd when she made a foray into the Hunter College locker room to round up student volunteers to serve punch at the Christmas Festival. Now, you must understand the enormity of this encounter. Faculty members never - absolutely NEVER - entered the locker room. To suddenly see our most august professor materialize with Gay at her side reduced us to incoherent fools and reduced the sound level of the locker room to that of an empty cavern.

But details were typical of Gay's planning. Punch was as important as renting the gymnasium. She knew very well, in entering that locker room, that one volunteer in hand is worth two notices on a bulletin board.

It was difficult to say no to Gay. Her ability to solicit volunteer help developed an ongoing corps of personally involved and devoted supporters of the Society. (From a practical viewpoint, it saved money, too.)

Dear Gay, whose name was lost to the nickname that was hopelessly entangled with her personality.

- whose vitality, strength and stamina put those of half her age to shame. She was gilded steel.
- whose English-isms endeared her to us once we broke the accent barrier. She never could bring herself to tell us to dispose of the American version of "cigarette ends."

She couldn't whistle, but Gay approximated it with a way of sucking and blowing air while she hummed. The sound would be heard whenever Gay got happily engrossed in a project. And what projects! Everything from buying and painting secondhand bureaus for Pinewoods staff rooms to planning the logistics for a major costumed song and dance production at the New York World's Fair.

Gay, the human computer working with a yardstick. She was one of the two people I ever knew who measured a yard nose to fingertip. In her later years, however, I was thankful for the ruts in the Pinewoods paths; they were the only things that kept her car on the road.

Gay, an extraordinary combination of experience, recall and involvement. It could be irksome to work closely with her because it seemed one was needed but wasn't doing anything. But if one could be patient enough to wait, one discovered that Gay had the whole project already mapped out, with all the steps to be taken arranged in logical sequence. In the several years at Pinewoods, when it was her custom to talk about folklore for a half hour before the evening's dancing, I never heard her repeat herself.

If there is a legacy Gay left us, above all it is her teaching. To teach dancing, not dances. To move guided by the musical phrase. To treat dance movements as social relationships. What a world of difference there is, for example, between "Turn away from your partner," and, "The man turns left and the woman right."

If there is an example Gay left for us, it is the zeal she brought to her work and the joy she derived from meeting people. For those of us who knew her a little more than casually, there can hardly be a memory of any Society activity without Gay being somehow attached. We miss her, yes; but we'll never forget her.

Gloria Berchielli



May Gadd and Lily Conant, 1952

It was sad news to hear "Gay" had left this world, but she certainly contributed a lot to English Country Dances in Pittsburgh from about 1950 until quite recently. The current CDS of Pgh., Pa. was principally due to her many dance sessions where the international folk group there sponsored by the YWCA held 2 camps and 2 or 3 workshops per year of the best leaders of all nationality dances. Frank Smith and she brought our loved dances to Pgh., particularly "Gay" in the last 25 years.

Particularly I remember when we had arranged and given several months' advance publicity to a camp where another CDS leader had agreed to handle the major teaching, that only a few days before the camp, (a weekend with about 100-125 people coming from several states) we were informed that personal matters prevented our expected leaders coming. We didn't know what to do, but I called "Gay" and she stepped into the breach so graciously that all the committee in charge were delighted by her spirit and performance.

I think more than any other, she sparked the present CDS of Pgh.

Yours,

Paul N. Bossart

It's very sad, Gay, to know you have gone, but wonderful to think about you and share memories.

You replied personally, by hand, to our inquiry about "The Gay Gordons," which some Connecticut dancers wanted to learn. You also suggested we should come and dance it with CDS at the forthcoming Christmas Ball. Our lifelong enchantment had begun, soon to be confirmed by a week at Pinewoods.

There, that first morning as we looked out our Pine Cones window, we were hardly prepared for you, a little lady rounding out a black bathing suit in unrestrained curves, laughing merrily with your swimming "buddy" after an early dip in Round Pond.

We can still hear your laughter when come camp antics touched your funny bone or when you told Yorkshire stories in your soft but racy dialect. You reminisced now and then about your young dancing days in England and laughed nostalgically at the very serious efforts of Cecil Sharp's followers to be "authentic," even to the extent of outfitting the men in dreary garden smocks. You took Cecil Sharp seriously, for sure, with single-minded devotion to his great work and his inspiration, but no garden smocks on the men for you!

You did love costumes, however, and so we did, too, as we absorbed the mystery of the Reindeermen or responded to the uplift of bells and sticks and feathered morris vests. The attire you recommended surely enhanced those beautiful Playford dances: graceful appeal for the ladies and elegant dash for the gentlemen.

Next to costumes, we recall, you believed in decorations. We once inquired, after a May Day celebration, "Why all those mirrors?" You replied - as if it were the most obvious of facts, "Oh, they bring the rays of the life-giving sun. It always shines on May Day."

Magic you must have had or could invoke. You were ever confident that your old favorite, the Hobby Horse, his mantle swirling against an unwed maiden, could bring her the mate of heart's desire. And when the Boar's Head was borne aloft at Christmas festivities, you made it the climax of exhilaration, a rejoicing tinged with awe, felt by all in some degree but most keenly by the bearers, chosen to present that ancient symbol of man, triumphant over wild and fearsome things, his survival and renewal once again assured.

We have been long away from your presence, Gay, but you are ever vivid to us among the widening circle of CDSS followers and friends, grateful for your help in finding that deep tap root of happiness you knew so well.

Margaret and John Ide



I first experienced (yes, that is the word I want) May Gadd in 1964, when I applied for a scholarship to the August camp, as Lifeguard. I wound up as Lifeguard, Dining Room Supervisor, Master of the Tea, and chief assistant to Peter Fricke, the Parking Lot and Dishwashing Foreman. So I learned my first lesson early: Never Let Gay Talk You Into Anything. What I never learned over the next 15 years was how to keep her from doing it.

But then, that's the whole point, isn't it? There are great teachers, who can get you to talk yourself into learning things you thought you couldn't, and there are great organizers, who can talk you into doing things you thought you wouldn't. Combine these two in one person, and you get a Cecil Sharp, a Jean Milligan, or a May Gadd.

Of course, sooner or later you come up against the catch: that same personal force -- the single-mindedness, dedication, and sheer persistence -- that got you involved and active always seems to be in the way when you want to try something of your own. The Society (to get back to the specific) would not exist as it is if not for May Gadd, and while it often seemed that the Society wasn't going anywhere for the same reason, the fact remains that it survived and thrived, during good times and trying ones, with Gay as Director. And when she did retire, it took three people to take over her job.

What about that catch? It's easy to say that, in her later years, Gay was just an old woman who couldn't keep up with the times, but I wonder. I suspect she wasn't all that different 15 years ago. It's just a matter of priorities. It's true that she wouldn't even listen when I once innocently suggested a change in the Tea Ritual, but she did agree with the proposition that the so-

cial rule that women do not ask men to dance was outmoded, socially restrictive, and ought to be abandoned. The same woman who was terribly upset when I instituted a small change in the dining-room procedure at Pinewoods (I changed it right back, you can be sure) was also the one who, after half a century of teaching, was happy in 1970 to have finally (she said) discovered a way to teach the last figure of "Newcastle."

Writing this down, one can see that ultimately there is no contradiction. Special people like Gay have to order their universes in a special way. The necessary corridors of discourse are traversed in predictable and unchanging paths; nonessential side passages are simply ignored. Patience, flexibility, the capacity to learn and grow -- these Gay reserved for the most important thing: teaching the dance. And I don't think she ever lost them. Even when her memory was failing, her powers of observation remained sharp. (Quite recently at Pinewoods, her critical comments regarding one Morris teacher were precise and accurate.)

When the Pinewoods Morris Men were formed in 1964, Gay was not terribly pleased. An important part of the problem was her worry that the same unconstructive split between the Society and the Morris men would occur here as it did in England, though we took steps to insure that it would not happen. I suspect that Gay never gave up all her reservations about the PMM, but I think eventually she accepted us as an important part of Pinewoods Camp and of the Country Dance community. Happily, she lived long enough to see the Morris suddenly take hold in the U.S., and I hope she approved, even if it didn't come about quite as she might have expected.

We can no longer learn our country dancing "under Miss Gadd's skillful and

## MAY GADD

She came from haunt of coot and hern,  
She made a sudden sally,  
Hurrah, the gallant two hand turn!  
Hooray, the Fieldtown galley!  
A temporary stay she planned,  
But found that New York City  
Grasped her with unrelenting hand  
And whispered "None so pretty!"  
She's filled our every dancing need  
And we value her right highly  
Whether she teaches Galopede,  
Old Mole or Up With Ailey.  
Footing it featly to and fro  
In staid or sprightly measure,  
With right hand star and do-si-do,  
For gents and Ladies Pleasure!  
Full fifty joyous years she's planned  
Full complements of dancing  
With rant and reel and saraband  
Retreating and advancing.  
So - while the passing ages flow  
Our love shall leave you never,  
For dancers come and dancers go,  
But Gay goes on forever!

- John P. Hodgkin

steady guidance," as they did in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne 58 years ago. But three full generations of dancers have grown up since Gay received her teaching certificates from the EFDS in 1915. The legacy of that guidance is all around us, wherever there is a Center or an Associate of the Country Dance and Song Society.

J. M. Graetz

I was shocked and grieved to hear of the death of May Gadd. To think the earth will no longer turn under her dancing feet makes me very sad. I spent three very happy Folk Music Weeks as a real Senior Camper. May made me feel as young as the 18 year olds. I was always grateful for her kindness. We are all poorer that she has gone.

Myra Elmers



Bob Hider and May Gadd, 1938



It was my good fortune to have known Gay since 1956. She was a good friend with whom I spent many happy and rewarding hours.

Because of Gay, I became a member and remained with the Country Dance Society for these many years; I had been a square dancer for a long time before a weekend at Netcong. Gay taught Morris. I loved it, and continued with English dance because of the interest I developed in Morris dance.

It was Gay who tapped me for the Executive Committee, for the Demonstration Dance Team, and to teach country dance. She even encouraged me to play the Concertina so I could join the dance band. It was Gay's Concertina I used until I bought my own.

I particularly enjoyed Gay's wonderfully cheerful and realistic outlook on life. She was kind, considerate and so appreciative of small things. Much of what she took in her stride would have stopped or prevented another person from carrying on.

Gay always planned ahead. She lived in the present, but when encouraged, told all the stories of the days of her life with Cecil Sharp and the other people of that era. I loved the times at Pinewoods where Gay talked to us about the dance. It was done after supper in the Camp house, and her talks were very informative and interesting.

Gay was a good friend, and I was happy to visit with her after her retirement and spent one vacation in Florida and another in Hawaii with Gay.

Few others have had so much influence on my life, and provided me with so much enjoyment over the years.

I shall always remember Gay, before her illness. She brought joy and happiness to so many people. Her great worry and concern for a while was that CDSS might not continue. We know that although there have been changes, the Society continues.

I know Gay would have been proud of the memorial ceremony for her at St. Paul's Chapel. This is certainly evidence that CDSS is alive and thriving and hopefully it will bring pleasure and happiness to many more people in the future.

Anne M. Soernssen



May Gadd and Christine Helwig,  
1977

S-24

Martt and I enjoyed dancing under Gay's leadership for years. We looked forward to being with her at Christmas school every December. And there was a long period when she used to come down on a regular basis to teach the students at The Potomac School in McLean, Virginia. On those occasions, she'd also run a dance for adults. We never missed this wonderful opportunity to dance with a real 'master'.

Our Playford Club lucked out and had Gay on two occasions for workshops, right here at our house. What a delight!

At our regular meeting this month on February 4, I led The Merry Merry Milkmaids, one of Gay's all-time favorites, in her memory.

I feel honored and fortunate to have studied under Gay for so long. I have attempted to present dancing in such a way as to live up to her excellent example of teaching with accuracy, vigor and enthusiasm all rolled up into one package.

Barbara Hicks Harding

The Chattahoochee Country Dancers wish to express their sorrow at the death of May Gadd. Many of us never had the opportunity to meet her, but those of us who have danced under tutelage remember her as an excellent and exacting instructor. We feel fortunate to have had her with us for so long. Moreover, it is exciting to watch the movement that Gay started in this country in the late 1920's continue to expand and attract enthusiastic new dancers all across the nation. We are some of those dancers. Thank you May Gadd.

Karen terHorst  
for the Chattahoochee  
Country Dancers

Gay was the root of my long and happy association with the Country Dance and Song Society. She was the first person I met when I came to Pinewoods in 1938, knowing nothing about the English Dances, and this plump, cheerful, bouncy little woman, with her clipped English way of speaking, went to my heart immediately. It's been my good fortune thru a long life dedicated to dance, to study with and know personally many of the great dancers of our time, and in the folk field Gay was the best. She had a strict, kindly way of teaching, interspersing whimsical quips that gave one the feel as well as the form of the dance. One time when she was here visiting me, we gave a party at our riding club, and she taught fifty guests, who had never heard of English dance, the time of their lives. She instantly had them all dancing. It was from that evening, that the Dunham Center was formed, and all our lives greatly enriched, since we now have a repertoire of about forty dance.

Since earth is not the beginning, nor death the end of life, perhaps we'll all be dancing together somewhere else in the universe.

Mildred Dickinson

We have been recalling Gay from back when we first joined the Tuesday night classes at the Church and how strict she was in requiring good dance technique before granting the privilege of enrolling in the advanced country dance class. She resisted any changes which she thought would weaken the independence and uniqueness of the CDSS. She left a fine legacy to all of us.

Harry & Frances Holtzman

S-25

Memories of May Gadd by some older members of CDSS in Asheville, N.C.

"I remember her as being so bouncy, yet poised."  
Emmy Lloyd

"She always said, 'If you don't know it, don't do it'. How could I?"  
Charlie Lloyd ("Doc")

"I had to listen intently to that accent! And we were honored and flattered when she asked us to demonstrate the waltz steps. Also when she asked me how I got all 360 students in school to learn country dancing." (Newton Academy in Asheville, no problem there.)  
"Boz" (O.S.) Clark

"I shall always remember "Gay" as I first saw her in the office at Longpond. She was quite the director-hostess, while Philip was nearby playing Flies in the Buttermilk."  
Isabel Clark

Among my cherished memories of Gay, starting with the days at the Dalcroze Studio thirty years ago when she gave me my first glimpse of the wonders of English Country Dancing, is one of her calmly picking up and casting aside a tree that had fallen across the road blocking our way into Pinewoods as we drove back late one night from a country dance performance at Newport Festival.

Another is of her spirited dancing in the Pinewoods Tradition - Morris.

But all memories - loving, inspiring, tender, funny, exasperating - merge into an overwhelming sense of gratitude for the joy she gave us and of our love for her.

Mireille Backer

I first danced with Gay in 1946. It was a revelation - the beginning of a new life with new friends and prof joys.

Gay created an atmosphere where newcomers felt welcome and were generously helped by Those-Who-Knew. She got beginners moving at once, even those as shy and awkward as I. And before long, with Phil's music to buoy and entice us and Gay's emphasis on style, we were dancing well.

In later years I worked with Gay on committees and on costuming Festivals, and she became a dear friend. She could be trying to work with at times, but one always felt her authority - her thorough knowledge of the tradition, the dances and the style - and her complete dedication to their preservation and to spreading the joy they gave.

I have danced with other excellent teachers, but for me Gay's plump little body with its astonishing grace, her boundless energy, her humor and spirit remain the embodiment of Country Dancing. I am forever grateful to her for the delight she gave me.

Lyndal Brandeis

I was very saddened to hear about the loss of May Gadd. I knew her as the ebullient, bouncy teacher at many Saturday parties and Tuesday classes, and the legend that got this whole business started over 50 years ago. I owe a lot to her.

So while I won't be able to greet her at the parties or be lucky enough to have her as a partner occasionally, I will keep a strong interest in CDSS and enclose my membership dues for 1979. This is only a token of my appreciation of May's work.

Brian Miller





If you are not a member of CDSs, and you would like to support the work of the Society in traditional dance, music and song, consider membership in the Society. Send annual dues to CDSs, 55 Christopher Street, New York, New York 10014.

5/79

\$15 Individual \$6. each additional person at same address

\$10 Undergraduate \$4. additional to receive English Dance & Song,  
the magazine of the English Folk Dance & Song Society

\$5. additional, for membership in the Pinewoods Folk Music Club (\$6.Family)

I'd like to receive a free Pinewoods Folk Music Club Newsletter

I'd like to be called for occasional volunteer work for the Society

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
member ?

are you  
a CDSs