

# THE COUNTRY DANCER

Winter

1959



# THE COUNTRY DANCER

The magazine of  
THE COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY OF AMERICA

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## Calendar of Events

- December 12, 1959 COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY OF AMERICA  
CECIL SHARP CENTENNIAL CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL  
Hunter College, New York. 8 to 12 p.m.
- December 19, 1959 COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY - BOSTON CENTRE  
CECIL SHARP CENTENNIAL CHRISTMAS PARTY  
Old South Church, Boston. 8 p.m.
- Dec. 27 - Jan. 1 CHRISTMAS COUNTRY DANCE SCHOOL  
Berea College, Berea, Kentucky
- January 6, 1960 C.D.S. NEW YORK WINTER SERIES OPENS  
Wednesday Dance Evenings with instruction  
Monthly Square and Country Dance Parties
- February 1960 NATIONAL C.D.S. THEATER BENEFIT IN NEW YORK  
Details to be announced
- April 7 - 10 MOUNTAIN FOLK FESTIVAL at Berea College, Ky.
- April 30 or May 7 C.D.S. SPRING FESTIVAL in New York
- August 7 to 28 C.D.S. at PINWOODS CAMP, Buzzards Bay, Mass.  
See page 29 for account of last summer's Dance Weeks.  
The Spring Country Dancer will describe Folk Music Week.

PICTURE CREDITS. By Gerhard Steinfeld, New York: Morris and Country dancing at Pinewoods 1959 (pages 30 and 31); Hudson Guild Farm, Main House (page 17) Supplied by The English Folk Dance and Song Society, London, England: Marshfield Mummers (page 7); Sword Dancers (p. 20-21.

## Marriages

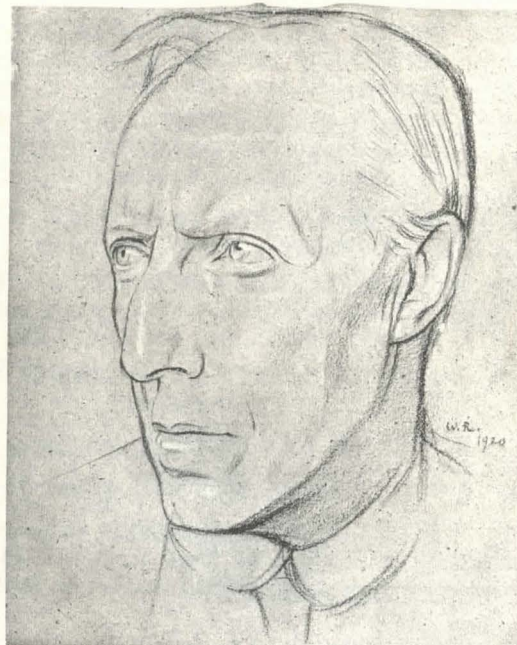
- GENSLE-CAJOLET: June 13, 1959 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Merlyn Gensler to Renald Cajolet.
- BECKER-GAMZON: June 21, 1959 in Huntington, New York, Louise Becker to Abraham I. Gamzon.
- SULLIVAN-GRIFFERTY: July 11, 1959 in New York, N.Y. Adrienne Sullivan to James J. Grifferty.
- MATSUMURA-HINCKLEY: August 8, 1959 in Honolulu, Hawaii, Nora Matsumura to Alden Dexter Hinckley.

## Births

- RAYNA: To Marian and Jerry Rayna of Center Valley, Pa., September 19, 1959, a daughter, ADRIENNE.



## Cecil Sharp



From a Drawing by Sir William Rothenstein

CECIL J. SHARP 1859-1924

Founder of the English Folk Dance Society

IN THIS CENTENARY YEAR OF CECIL SHARP we think of the delight of moving to the gay and lovely English country dance tunes, the smooth intricacies of sword dancing, the vigor of the morris dances, the charm and variety of the folk songs, and we are deeply grateful to the man who spent his life in saving this material from being lost - at a time when its value was recognized by few others.

All who have read CECIL SHARP, written by A.H. Fox Strangways and Maud Karpeles, must have felt how large a part chance seemed to play in the rescue of this folk art from oblivion. The out-of-season morris dances that he happened to see while spending Christmas of 1899 at Headington, near Oxford; the hearing of his first "living" folk song sung by a gardener who was working in the Somerset garden of another friend; seeing his first sword dance at Kirkby Malzeard in Yorkshire and the longways country dances in the south of England; and so to the recognition of the fact that the John Playford English Dancing Master, first published in 1650 and preserved in the British Museum, was a collection of country dances that were the direct outcome of an unbroken tradition.

(continued on page 12)

## And to you our Wassail too ...

When on Twelfth Night, 1617, Ben Jonson presented the entertainment of "Christmas his Maske," he offered to his royal patrons and their guest Pocohontas a little diversion in a season when feasts and masques of immense luxury and cost were taking place in many noble houses where the King and the Queen were guests. Thinly disguised, though richly dressed, this "maske" is a mummers' visit such as up and down the country was bringing luck to farmhouse and manor, cottage and hall, where guisers craved room and entry and were chased out with red hot pokers; Hobby-horse, Tup and Snake gambolled and claimed largesse and Ploughboys enacted a rite more ancient than the world the Elizabethans knew. As the Folk Play is enacted by the Fool and his sons, so is this Christmas entertainment by Gregory Christmas, his sons - Misrule, Carol, Gambol, Post-and-Pair, New Year's Gift, Mumming, Offering and Baby-Cake, and his daughters - Minced-Pie and Wassail, each, as according to tradition, accompanied by a Torch-bearer, each, as according to tradition, carrying the insignia of their calling; and, so that no-one should mistake the significance of the entertainment and insignia Christmas - who plays Presenter - is attended by Cupid.

First entered Misrule as a reveller in a great ruff; then Carol with a flute and song-book; Gambol, tumbling through a hoop hung with bells; Post-and-Pair carrying cards and counters and wearing a gown patched with Aces and Pairs; New Year's Gift came as a serving-man bearing the traditional and significant gifts of orange, gingerbread and gilded rosemary; Mumming declared himself in pied suit and vizard; Offering carried his cap and basin, and Baby-Cake a great cake containing the bean or pea together with a dagger; while the daughters, Minced Pie came in as a cook-wife with her man to carry the pie,\* dish or spoons; and Wassail, dressed as "a neat sempstress or songster," entered last, her page bearing a brown bowl decked with ribbons and rosemary.

Wassailing can be a women's rite. Elsewhere we hear of the young women dressed as Jonson describes going from door to door with their wassailing carol, carrying the decorated bowl as the Mayers carried their branch and the bag with the silken string. And we learn that the bowl served not only to contain the ale and roasted crab-apples, but, like Offering's basin, to receive the wherewithal to pro-

\* Minced-pies at this time were filled with spiced meat, not fruit, and were box-shaped.



vide the festive drink.

A correspondent from Stroud (Glos.) has described how in 1948 wassailers still made their rounds as they had done immemorially, but with a change that indicated beyond doubt that the wassail was a 'komos' or luck-bringing visitation, as described by Douglas Kennedy in his "Dramatic Elements in the Folk Dance." Without the offering "lining it well within" there was no showing of the "branch," no "love and joy" nor "to you our wassail too!" - for the "decorated bowl" which the Stroud wassailers used to carry was by then a decorated shopping-basket.

The masked visiting or fire procession in Shetland has been described in Up-helly-aa by C. E. Mitchell; not so long ago similar visitations took place at Mansfield (Notts) and several elderly correspondents have sent to Cecil Sharp House descriptions of the curious creatures which invaded Christmastide kitchens to perform their "mask," while from Christ's College, Cambridge has been received a 17th century account of that "hobby-horse play" performed "when I was a boy, before the Civil Warre," we know as the Horn Dance of Abbot's Bromley.

But of all the visitations the Plough-rite was, and in a few places, notably the East Midlands, still is, the most significant and entire. Sometimes the "players" or dancers are accompanied by a Horse, a character particularly explicit, the head and tail attached fore and aft to the frame of a "riddle" or sieve worn round the waist of the performer and half-concealed by the "vizard" or mask covering head and body; sometimes there were two such characters, a light and dark; sometimes, as at Oakham, the dancers themselves were the horses. A correspondent has sent a description communicated by a local resident who had been one of the players; the text of the play does not differ materially from most examples of its kind, but the description of the dress leaves little doubt of the players' identification (like that of the Calusari) with the horse-symbol itself. Here it is:-

"I first learned this play when I was about 15 years old, that is, 52 years ago, and it was an old custom then. We used to practise in a barn or stable belonging to the farmers about a month before we went round on the Monday (after Twelfth night) and finish up on the Saturday night, and the proceeds we used to divide among us; it used to average about 5 shillings to 10 shillings each. Most villages at that time had a team of their own. The Head Man would be the waggoner for the Squire or the largest farmer in the place. We used to dress up among ourselves. The Head Man used to fasten horse face-brasses on his jacket and have cadice ribbons round his hat



Marshfield Mummers

and fastened in his buttonholes. The Fool had a shirt over his clothes with pieces of print and fancy stuff stitched all over it and a tall hat with ribbons all round it. The Servant-Man had brasses and ribbons on and carried a long whip. The Lady (which was a man) had a dress, hat and veil. The Sergeant had a soldier's coat and hat that was kept on purpose for it and braid fastened down the seams of his trousers. The Thrasher had straw bands round his hat and round his waist and carried a flail, a thing they thrashed corn with years ago. The Doctor used to wear a black swallow-tail coat and top hat. Hopper Joe used to have a straw band round his hat and waist and carried a basket that we called a hopper, and he would go round the room and collect what they had to give him."

As the play concluded the Head Man cried, "What do you want to see in the hopper, Tommy?" And the Fool would answer, "A piece of minced-pie-pork-pie!" and so lead out, the rest following and singing:-

"Good master and good mistress,  
You see our Fool is gone.  
We make it our business  
To follow him along.  
We thank you for civility  
And what you've gave us here.  
We wish you all good-night  
And another Happy New Year."

MARGARET DEAN-SMITH

MARGARET DEAN-SMITH F.S.A., is well-known as a bibliographer and as an authority on folk songs and dances. for some years she was Librarian to the English Folk Dance and Song Society and Editor of its Journal. Author of A Guide to English Folk Song Collections 1822 - 1952 (1954) and Playford's English Dancing Master 1651 - A Facsimile Reprint with an Introduction, Bibliography and Notes by Margaret Dean-Smith (1957).



The names of some of the English Country Dances have always been a fascinating subject of discussion, conjecture, and sometimes research among the dancers of our Society. We know, of course, that the tunes of many of the Playford dances were instrumental adaptations of popular songs, folk or theatre, which circulated on the streets and in society. A good tune like "Greensleeves" might be used for songs amorous, didactic, or political, and thus become so familiar that the fiddler or piper for any sort of dance - country, morris, or sword=swung into it as instinctively as does the square-dance fiddler today with "Red River Valley." Other Playford tunes have been traced to the Continent. "Confess" takes its name from Mr. Confesse, the dancing master who designed the dances for Ben Johnson's "Oberon" in 1611. Some names reflect the great houses where they were performed - Nonesuch, the fabulous Tudor palace in Surrey; Sion House, still one of the sights of London; Apley House, Ormond House and the rest. The "Maggots" were composed by or for persons of some importance and went by their names. (A "maggot" is "a fantastic notion or caprice.") The Jigs of Kemp and Jacob Hall were probably song-and-dance acts which followed stage plays. Jacob Hall was a tight-rope walker; Will Kepp was the comedian of Shakespeare's company who dances the "Nine Daies Morris" from London to Norwich. The ballad beginning "Came ye not from Newcastle" gave our tune its name. The dramatists and moralists - for different reasons - often mentioned dances: Thomas Nash, in "Have with you to Saffron Walden" (1596), speaks satirically of "All the flowers of the broom," "Pepper's Black", and "Greensleeves." And perhaps at this point a reminder is in order that "Playford Dances" are those described in a series of dance manuals which began under John Playford's editing in 1650 and went through 18 editions before 1728, growing from a small quarto to three volumes, still considered an invaluable source for English popular music of three centuries.



The earliest allusion to a country dance by name is found in "The Complaynt of Scotland" (1548), where shepherds (probably disguised courtiers) perform "The Dede Dance", our "Nightpiece." "Misogonous", a dramatic poem of 1560, mentions this dance, also "Putney Ferry." A manuscript including pieces from the reign of Edward VI to Elizabeth quotes "A merry ballet of the hathorne tree" as sung to "Dargison." In an old romance there was a dwarf named Dargison (perhaps dwarf's son, from A.S. "duergar": dwarf). But of course a dance tune may have been known long before it is mentioned. And our interest is not only in antiquity, fascinating though that is, but rather in vitality, the power of an ancient dance to put us so happily into action today.

The bits of early allusion quoted below reflect the practice or knowledge of some of the dances familiar to us. Some come from a list I prepared for the EFDSS Journal (Vol. III, Nos. 2,3,4, 1936-9), others from a study made in 1931 by Mrs. George Maynard, for many years an enthusiastic dancer in the Boston group. She has given me permission to use it in any way interesting to present-day dancers, and it can be read in full in the Headquarters Library. For those who wish to dig deeper, see Wm. Chappell's Old English Popular Music (2 vols. London, 1893), and Margaret Dean-Smith's facsimile edition of Playford's English Dancing Master (1650) (London, Schott, 1957).

#### "Nonesuch"

(The Earl of Worcester- to the Earl of Salisbury, 1602)  
 "There is much dancing of Country Dances in the privy Chamber at Nonesuch, before the Queen's Majesty who is exceedingly pleased therewith. ....The Queen....is almost every night in the Presence to see the ladies dance the old and new Country dances with the pipe and tabor." (n.b. "Nonesuch" is essentially a pipe and tabor tune.)

#### "Half Hannikin"

(Office book of Christmas Revels at Whitehall, 1622)  
 "The measures, branles, corantos and galliards being ended, the masquers, with the ladies, did daunce two country dances, namely, 'The Soldiers' Marche' and 'Huff Hannikin.'" (Perhaps corrupted from 'honig-kuchen', like many German and Dutch words taken over by the English at this time)

#### "Hit and Miss"

(Whitlock, in 'Zootamia', 1654) "...one whose practise in physic is nothing more than the Country Dance called 'Hit or Misse.'"

#### "Hey, Boys"

(Pepys' Diary, 1662, of a court ball at Whitehall) "Then to country dances, the king leading the first, which he called for, which was, says he, 'cuckolds all awry', the old dance of England." (n.b. We dance "Hey Boys" to the tune of "Cuck-olds all a Row.")

#### "Sellenger's Round, or, The Beginning of the World"

(n.b. Sir Anthony St. Leger was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in the 16th century. The tune is probably an Irish importation and the name St. Leger corrupted to Sellenger.)

(Bacchus' Bountie, 1593) "An old hop-about commonly called 'Sellenger's Round'".

(Middleton, Father Hubbard's Tales, 1604) "Do but imagine now what a sad Christmas we all kept in the country without either carols, was sail-bowls, dancing of Sellenger's Round in moonshine nights about May-poles... or any of our old Christmas gambols."

(The Return from Parnassus, 1606) "...there's not a country wench that can dance Sellenger's Round but can talk of Dick Burbage and Will Kemp."

(Lingua, 1607) "The first tune the planets played was 'Sellenger's Round', in memory whereof, ever since, it hath been called 'The Begining of the World.'"

(Heywood, A Woman Killed with Kindness 1607)

Jack Slime: I come to dance, not to quarrel. Come, what shall it be? 'Rogerero'?

Jenkin: 'Rogerero', no; we will dance 'The Beginning of the World.'

Cicely: I love no dance so well as 'John, come kiss me now.'

Nicholas: I that have ere now deserv'd a cushion, call for 'The Cushion Dance.'

R. Brick: For my part, I like nothing so well as 'Tom Tyler.'

Jack Slime: 'The Hay', 'The Hay', there's nothing like 'The Hay.'

Nicholas: "Put on your smock on a Monday'."

Jack Slime: So the dance will come cleanly off: come, for God's sake agree of something; if you like not that, put it to the musitians, or let me speak for all, and we'll have 'Sellenger's Round.'



(Heywood, Fair Maid of the West, 1631) "They have so tired me with their moriscoes, and I have so tickled them with our country dances, Sellenger's Round and Tom Tiler.."

(Shirley, Lady of Pleasure, 1635) "....to hear a fellow make himself merry and his horse with whistling 'Sellenger's Round', and to observe with what solemnity they keep their wakes, moriscoes, and Whitsun-ales, are the only amusements of the country."

EVELYN K. WELLS

#### CECIL SHARP (continued from page 4)

But it was Cecil Sharp's understanding of the quality of his findings that put chance to work. His life work grew out of his love of the English dances, music and songs and of the people who made them; and he had the qualities needed to translate this love into action, not least among them "a fund of patience and a sense of humour". He pursued every clue, and his knowledge of music and of folk and historical background enabled him to distinguish between the true and the worthless.

An invitation to America to direct the dances for the Granville Barker production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" brought opportunities of introducing English dances and songs to American people, resulting in the formation in 1915 of "The United States Branch of The English Folk Dance Society." Subsequent visits enabled him to spend considerable time in the Southern Appalachians, resulting in the classic collection of nine hundred and sixty-eight tunes for two hundred and seventy-three songs and ballads of English origin.

Cecil Sharp's published collections are of immense value to folklorists and musicologists, but we who love to dance the dances, sing the songs or play the tunes, are doubly grateful to him because he not only saved this wealth of material from being lost but he had the genius to put it into circulation again - by means of the Society he founded.

The headquarters of the Country Dance Society in New York opened its celebration of the Cecil Sharp Centennial Year with

IAN EVENING OF DANCE AND SONG  
FROM THE COLLECTION OF CECIL SHARP

ON THE OCCASION OF THE CENTENARY OF HIS BIRTH  
(November 22, 1859)

Invitations were sent out widely and we had a wonderful gathering of old and new friends. John Bremer, who learned his dancing in England, presented a team of morris and sword dancers and Jean Ritchie sang her Appalachian Mountain songs.

English folk songs were sung and traditional and Playford country dances were danced to the wonderful music of Philip Merrill's orchestra and to a marvellous recorder trio - Martha Bixler, Maureen Forsberg and Eric Leber.

One of our most honored guests was Mr. John Martin, dance critic of the New York Times, who has for many years given wonderful support and encouragement to the work of the Society. He was with us from the beginning to the end of the evening, and, on the following Sunday (November 29th) devoted his space in the Times to an appreciation of Cecil Sharp, the dances and music that he restored to us, and the work of the Society in this country. We quote the following extracts:

"... A charming and unpretentious evening of exhibitions and general dancing, constituting a kind of informal chronicle of Mr. Sharp's progress as a collector from his first sight of a genuine morris dance in 1899 to his adventures in our own Appalachians in the years of World War I. And everybody had a fine time.

"What lovely stuff it is, choreographically, musically and convivially! And how admirably the society is keeping it alive! Or rather, in all conscience, how admirably the dances and their enchanting music are keeping the society (and its members) alive.

"...it was he, (Cecil Sharp) who established the English Folk Dance Society in 1911. When he was in this country four years later, he established a United States Branch, and the present Country Dance Society of America is its direct descendant.

"Though it is a separate organization, it is affiliated with the parent organization in England and is its local representative. Also, it continues to dance its head off, all winter in the city and all summer up at Buzzards Bay, with a concentrated program of teaching along with its summer camp practices.

"... And now it is the year 1959, and thousands of people are dancing a great body of rich and glorious dances, finding deep and healing personal satisfactions, fulfilling their innate demands for gregariousness in an age of enforced defensive isolation..... In this centennial year of "C#" as he has been affectionately rechristened, we could not do better, for the sake of our own souls, than to look into the wealth of ageless verities he has opened the way to."

We thank Mr. Martin for this tribute to a great man and his work. We hope that many dance or music centers will ob- this centennial year in some way. We shall be glad to give any help that is in our power. And when you go to England, be sure to visit CECIL SHARP HOUSE, built in London in memory of C#, as a home for the English Folk Dance and Song Society.

MAY GADD



## A President Leads A Christmas Procession

A splendid Boar's Head Procession and Country Dances brought English folklore to Hunter College last Christmas. Through the generous cooperation of the Country Dance Society and several departments, the college was able to appreciate the beauty, charm, and vitality of Old English Tradition and to plant these traditions in its own soil. The half hour program was given on the large stage of the auditorium as pre-parandial to the annual Christmas luncheon.

Our planning for the assembly began one morning in early November at C. D. S. Headquarters. Two members of the faculty availed themselves of the invaluable knowledge and generous counsel of May Gadd. After her most cordial welcome, we spent two very exciting and delightful hours. And so in the charming atmosphere at "55 Christopher", our basic plan took form. When we departed, all our problems seemed solved, for May Gadd had discussed the music, costumes, tradition, dances, characters for the procession, and other details. Our next step was to seek inter-departmental cooperation for the program. We returned to college enthusiastic and excited about many new ideas and indeed very grateful for May Gadd's wonderful help, knowledge, and suggestions. In the weeks that followed we tried to project to our students the enthusiasm and spirit of the English Country Dance Society, and so on December twenty-third, we presented the second Christmas Assembly Program, which had been started originally by Joan Schmidt in 1957. More money, time, and effort helped to build on Joan's idea and 1958 was truly an inter-departmental project.

Two Heralds and a trumpet quartet composed the fanfare for the opening of the program and started the Grand Procession moving down the broad stairs on either side of the auditorium to the stage. Entering to the strains of a Somerset Wassail, a medieval Lord and Lady of the Manor, their Chaplain, Householders, and tenants crossed the stage and took their places around the long festive table. A gracious welcome from the gentles set the scene for the two main features of the program: The Dinner Procession and the Dances.

To the music of "Caput Apri Defero" our President Dr. George N. Shuster, led the Dinner Procession. With his high white Cook's hat, he carried the Boar's Head assisted by the Butler, a professor in the Classics Department. The huge head appeared fierce, but smiling. Next came the personages of the menu: Roast Beef of England - Sir Loin, followed by Dame Peacock Pie, Plum Pudding, the Wassail Bowl and finally

Salt and Mustard - two five year old children. Off stage could be heard the laughter and song of the tenants and villagers, "Here We Come a-Wassailing". Now bidden to enter, they had brought with them the Lord of Misrule, Hobby Horse, and twenty-four dancers in brilliant red, white, and green costumes. Carrying their holly branches and ribboned sticks, they entered with the "Gisburn Processional". To entertain the entire group now assembled at the Manor, the male villagers danced the "Long Sword Dance" and all danced "Gathering Peascods". Before the final curtain, the Lord of the Manor, invited all the students and faculty to the annual Christmas luncheon. With the reappearance of the Heralds and the fanfare of the trumpets, the Grand Procession continued to the Commons.

The most satisfactory part of working out this program was the wonderful cooperation of faculty and students, of groups, and departments. The English Club wrote the script and assigned the speaking parts. The Lord of the Manor, an instructor of English, escorted his Lady, the Vice-President of Student Council. A Biology Professor in his black gown took the part of the Chaplain. Under the supervision of the Art Department, a talented student, interested in both art and biology, had created the magnificent Boar's Head. The dancers represented many departments and were directed by the Department of Physical Education. An English Professor carried the responsibility for the entire production, and rehearsals directed by the Speech and Dramatics Department, provided a stage manager, lighting, and some handsome costumes. These were in addition to those costumes rented from the Country Dance Society. The gay costumes of the dancers were designed and made by a member of the faculty in Home Economics. The Department of Music supplied carols and incidental music in joint effort with an accompanist from the Physical Education Department, who played for the processions and folk dances; also a soloist and the trumpet quartet. Last but not least, Student Council made a sizeable gift of money and the Alumni Association surprised the undergraduates with the funds to start a basic wardrobe for the dancers. The Office of the Dean of Students assembled the program, which was printed in the business office. For the artistic drawings on the cover, we were deeply indebted to Genevieve Shimer.

Many cultures, many faiths, many nations are represented in the student body at Hunter College. Perhaps this is why Hunter students always respond to any opportunity to become more familiar with the various traditions of other lands that help to enrich our American life. So appealing was the Boar's Head Festivity of 1958, that we hope it has found a niche in the college calendar.

GRACE J. CALDER, Dept. of English  
JANE S. DRAGER, Dept. of Physical Education



## "If you can walk, you can dance!"

Since 1954, Cy Grossman has been bringing dancing to people who "thought they could never - or were no longer able to - participate" in this form of recreation. At his invitation last Spring, I went to the Douglas Housing Project where he was holding a session. The evening was delightful and the members of the Senior Citizens Club (ages 60-70 years) so jolly and enthusiastic, it seemed to me that other CDS people would enjoy seeing how Cy leads a group. As a result, during the October Country Dance Party, members and friends of CDS had an opportunity to watch a group of Cy's oldsters present some modified folk dances. The enjoyment these older people had doing the dances was heart-warming, and it was a pleasure to share in their enthusiasm. Afterwards, they watched us dance and joined us for refreshments.

Cy, a Public Accountant, has long been a Folk and Square Dance enthusiast, and has taken extensive graduate work in Recreation and Education. At present, he says he divides his time about equally between Public Accounting and dance programs for oldsters and the handicapped. He has written several articles about his work, and has had innumerable articles written about him and the pleasure he has brought to various groups.

Very briefly, Cy's philosophy about leading Senior Citizens is to know that moderate physical activity is important. As the leader, one must sell the idea to the group because they are usually timid, self-conscious, or lack confidence. Cy's own twinkly smile, friendliness, and sense of humor are catching. He treats the evening as fun, not as a "class", and his advice to anyone who wants to lead such groups is to avoid all words such as "lesson", "teacher", etc. One must also allow time for resting, regardless of the enthusiasm of the group.

(continued on page 38)

## October Weekend

The annual Hudson Guild Farm Dance Weekend held October 16-18, brought out a good crowd. For the first time in several years, the weather was sunny and just nippy enough to make the warm-up dances a real pleasure. By general consent, afternoon dancing on Saturday was shortened so that those who wished to stroll around the lovely farm did so, while the recorder players had more time to play together. It was very nice to see that the program is flexible enough to allow for such changes, wind, weather, and the group agreeing.



The staff of May Gadd, Genevieve Shimer, Bob Hider, John Bremer, and Phil Merrill gave us a wonderful time in Country, Morris, Rapper and Long Sword, and Contra as well as Square Dancing. The music was as delightful as ever with the inimitable Phil Merrill constantly holding forth and joined from time to time by Larry Herlick and his new banjo, drum by May Gadd and John Bremer, and accordion by A. C. King. During the Saturday evening party, visiting fiddler, Chick Whitney played some lively Square Dance tunes to calls by Phil, Bob, and Larry.

It was a pleasure to see old friends like David Bridgham from the Boston area and Arnold "Buddy" Rupp who is now living in Seattle, Wash., and to welcome new dancers, especially Joan O'Reilly who dances with the EFDSS in England. The Philadelphia area was represented by John Hodgkin and Mrs. Hider dropped by for the Saturday party.

Our thanks again go to Mr. Curtis Ream for all he does to make our weekends at Hudson Guild so successful and happy. With the addition of a new house for living, we can accommodate many more people, and are looking forward to even bigger and better weekends in the future.

A.C.K.



## A RIGGED COUNTRY DANCE QUIZ

Reeling from the many "multiple choice" examinations he has recently taken, Abe Gamzon of the New York C.D.S. group has submitted, with tongue thrust firmly in cheek, a Country Dance Quiz.

Each of the following incomplete statements is followed by four (4) names of phrases, one of which accurately completes the statement. Check that one. You may, if you care, check your score against the answers below.

1. The Country Dance Society of America has its roots and origins in
  1. Durkee's back yard
  2. Hunter College
  3. the English Folk Dance and Song Society
  4. the New England Folk Festival
2. John Playford was
  1. an Elizabethan playboy
  2. an English editor and publisher of the 17th century
  3. inventor of the earliest sports car
  4. inventor of the hobby horse
3. The term "half gyp" refers to
  1. a shady business deal
  2. someone who has gypsy blood
  3. a figure used in Morris Dancing
  4. a figure used in Country Dancing
4. The term "arming" refers to
  1. a football tactic
  2. completing a knitted sweater
  3. distributing swords for Appleforth
  4. a figure used in Country Dancing
5. "Morris Hey" is
  1. a street call used in the Bronx
  2. a special fodder for cattle
  3. a specific movement in which three dancers each weave a figure eight pattern
  4. a nonsense phrase

		ANSWERS	
1.	3	3.	3
2.	2	4.	4
		5.	3

## Sword Dance Costume



Earsdon Sword Dancers

PHOTOGRAPHS OF ENGLISH SWORD DANCERS wearing the traditional dance costume of their village are shown on the left and on the next two pages.

EARS DON (Northumberland) White shirts decorated with bows and rosettes of colored ribbon; black knee breeches of alpaca, and broad yellow sashes. Formerly the stockings were striped and decorated with knee ribbons. The ROYAL EARS DON team wears jackets and breeches of crimson plush, but this is more recent. The "rapper" swords are of flexible steel, 24 inches long.

GRENOSIDE (Yorkshire) High buttoned cotton tunics variously patterned but predominantly red in tone, ornamented with large scrolls

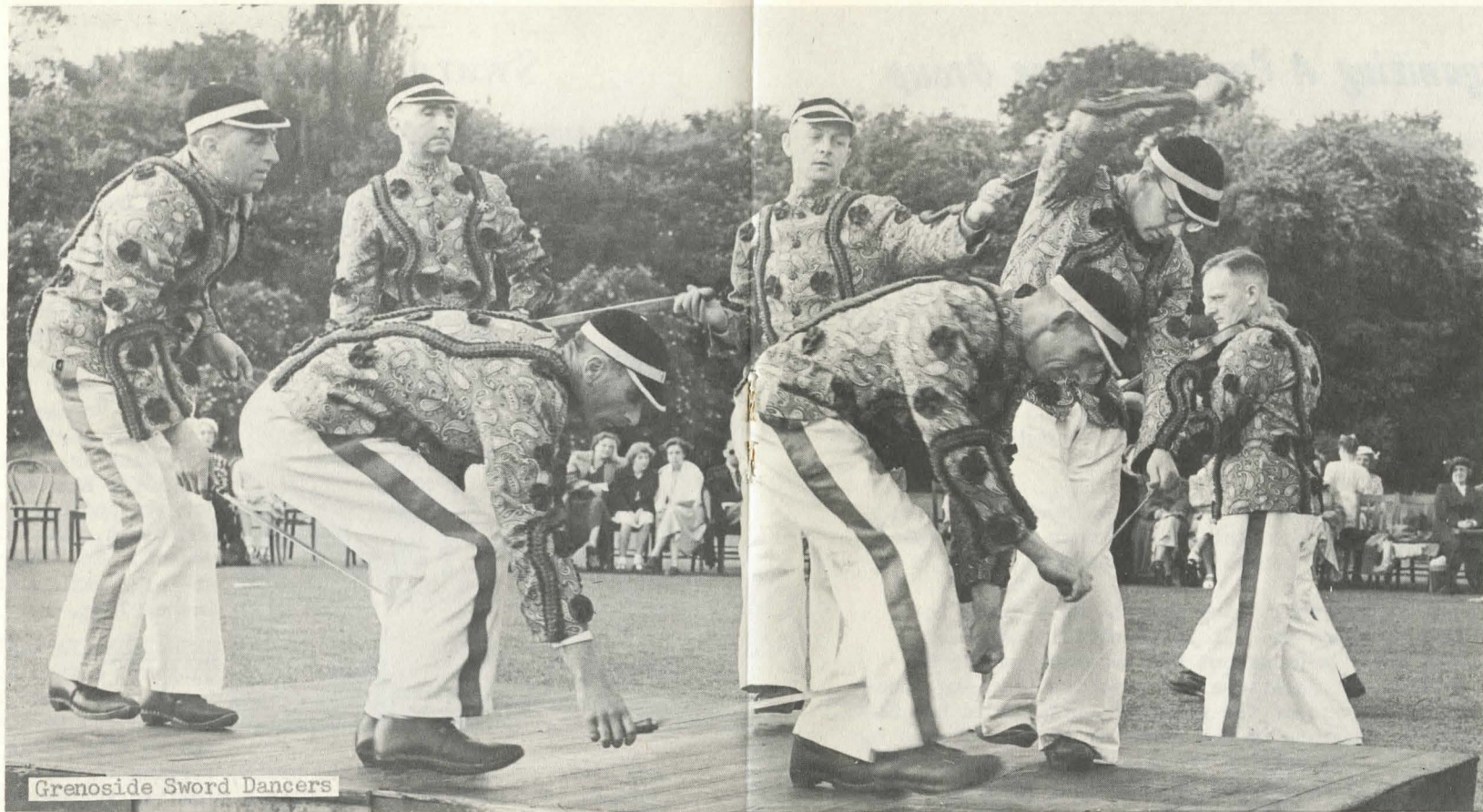
and lines of closely quilted braid, varying in design with each jacket. Trousers are white with a wide red stripe down each leg. The cap is of black velvet with yellow piping. Clogs are worn. The swords are of rigid steel about 25 inches long and 3/4 inch wide. The Captain wears a cloth helmet covered with a rabbit's skin, with the head of the animal set in front.

HANDSWORTH (Yorkshire) Tunics of black velvet ornamented with seven rays of white braid across the chest and binding the crimson cuffs. White trousers covered to the knee with black gaiters, and black boots. A crimson velvet cap with ribbons at the back and feathery white pads in front. Rigid steel swords.

FLAMBOROUGH (Yorkshire) Danced by fishermen, who wear blue jerseys and caps and white trousers. Earlier, the dancers blackened their faces and wore red jackets decked with rosettes and bunches of gaily colored ribbons. Wooden swords are used, 37 inches long.

KIRKBY MALZEARD (Yorkshire) (Not shown). Red flannel tunics cut soldier fashion and trimmed with white braid down the front and round the collar and sleeves; white trousers with a red stripe down the side of each leg; cricket caps quartered in red and white. Swords as at Grenoside.





Grenoside Sword Dancers



Handsworth Sword Dancers



5. Flamborough Sword Dancers

W. R. R.



# On Organizing A Country Dance Group

(Ned and Marjorie Shrigley of New Augusta, Indiana -- near Indianapolis -- have tried in the past to organize a country dance group in their community, but without lasting success. In the belief that their experience and advice may help other members of C.D.S., the editors persuaded them to set down their conclusions.)

Be it skiing, swimming, tennis, or English country dancing, when we find keen enjoyment in a recreation, we want to acquaint others with its pleasures. But in sharing the pleasures of country dancing, more than the missionary spirit is involved. If one lives far from a dance center, he must start his own group or relinquish the fun of dancing.

In our several attempts to do this, we have found that unquenchable enthusiasm is essential; but much more is required of one in order to become a good leader.

It does not follow that being able to do a dance insures being able to teach it. It is essential that the would-be leader, after working out his program, gather together some friends and relations and practise teaching those dances. In teaching, one of the greatest pitfalls is the too wordy explanation. Another is the tendency to demonstrate too long, and not to let the waiting group get into action. Even the simple terms which we use can be confusing without a clear explanation. For example, in teaching longways, the phrase "The twos move up and the ones move down," can be baffling to a beginning group.

Only with much practise does the amateur leader find out how to explain clearly and concisely. It's an art!!! And for the inexperienced leader each dance must be practised. Only the accomplished cook would dare attempt a new recipe when serving a company dinner. So only the experienced dance leader would attempt an explanation without having practised it first on a small and tolerant group.

Our several attempts to organize a group in Indianapolis have met with failure--a poor recommendation for the advice which we offer so freely! We now believe that in starting a Country Dance group it is essential to plan the program to include only English country dancing and American contras. If folk dances from other nations are introduced the English and American styling becomes blurred and every dance tends to look more or less the same. The leader will have to be firm in holding to this programming. If some of the members

want strongly to teach other dances a compromise can be worked out. At the end of the two hour English dance session (a good time interval) officially close the evening but keep the hall open for those who want to stay on for international dancing.

If my husband and I were magicians, we would recreate here in Indianapolis the type of group with which we danced at Yale in the 1940s. To us this was an ideal set-up. The CDS center was composed of some very experienced dancers who set high standards for the rest of us. Included were a number of newcomers who brought the fiery enthusiasm of the newly-converted. And because this group included a number of students the shifting population caused an occasional reshuffling, which adds spice to any organization.

Not only was the composition of the group interesting but the method by which this CDS center was conducted was admirable. Each of the fortnightly meetings operated on a shared-leadership basis. Each time, several individuals were assigned a dance to teach at the next gathering. This forced the beginners to learn the dances, gave them teaching experience and made them feel a sense of participation.

This method of conducting a group is possible only when the experienced dancers who own instruction and record libraries will take the time to type out directions, to lend records, and to help a beginner, when he cannot understand the written direction for an assigned dance. But to us this shared leadership method is the best--and the hardest--way to manage a successful country dance group.

## RECORDER NEWS: What's Playing

### ABOUT RECORDERS

The past twenty years have seen both a revival and growth of interest in music performed chiefly for and by amateurs. The last ten years have brought forth guitar and banjo players, folk singers and dancers in large numbers throughout America. Along with this renewed interest in folk material - crafts, dance and song - has come a new interest in "old" music, played for the most part on the recorder, an instrument practically unknown not too many years ago.

By now, almost everyone has seen, heard, and/or played this end-blown wooden flute, and it's popularity is increasing at a phenomenal rate. It is a relatively easy instrument to play, and an excellent instrument for a young child to learn,



being easy enough to play yet having a sufficient range to compass almost any tune or folk melody.

But it's greatest popularity is among adults, and it has enabled many persons who have never played an instrument before or who have had a brief acquaintance with piano or violin to have the wonderful experience of making music themselves and with other people.

The recorder has provided thousands of people with the opportunity to play "house" music, music written expressly for the recorder by such composers as Bach, Telemann and Loeillet in the Baroque era; Henry Cowell, Benjamin Britten and Paul Hindemith in our time. In addition to the almost inexhaustible store of literature written for the recorder, there is an equal quantity of transcribed music, pieces originally written for voices, strings, lute, organ, harpsichord, piano, etc. - and much of it is pleasing done with recorders. Recorder literature encompasses the known music literature of the western world and thus provides a very rewarding way of becoming acquainted with our musical heritage.

The recorder family is comprised basically of soprano, alto, tenor and bass instruments, with sometimes the addition of contra-bass, the lowest sounding, and sopranino, the highest sounding members of the family. Many well-known musicians play recorders and there is a growing number of professional as well as amateur players.

The Country Dance Society has taken a very active role in promoting this growth of interest in the recorder. Starting with a single group of eight people who began meeting with Philip Merrill about 5 years ago, the number of groups has expanded to five, totalling fifty-five members. The teaching staff in New York and Pinewoods Camp has included Martha Bixler, Gretel and Paul Dunsing, Marleen Forsberg, and Johanna Kuhlbach, all well-known teachers in the recorder field.

In addition to group playing, C.D.S. uses the recorder in playing dance tunes both at parties and festivals and on dance records already made and in the making. The instrument's clear tone makes it a welcome addition to the dance orchestra.

Both as an instrument used in dance activities and as an instrument used for recreation and the playing of chamber music the recorder has acquired a well-deserved popularity. We hope more people will come to learn the recorders and to enjoy them as many of us now do.

ERIC LEBER

SUITE NO. I BY ERIC LEBER

### An Appreciation

by Martha Bixler

I am delighted to have an opportunity to say publicly what I think about Eric Leber's Suite for three recorders, for I have loved it ever since I became acquainted with it last August and am most anxious for other people to know it and enjoy it. Not only is it a very fine piece of music, beautifully written, but, most important, it makes the recorders sound like the lovely instruments they are. Too many modern composers have presented us with pieces for recorder in which the instrument is made to sound like a tin whistle, a flock of scolding birds, a calliope, or worse. Eric Leber knows the recorder thoroughly; an outstanding performer and teacher, he has written for the instrument with skill, with tenderness, and not without respect for its sometimes cranky characteristics.

Structurally, the Suite consists of an Overture, a Fugue, a Waltz and a Finale. The Overture is slow, and still, to me, though I have played it many times, very moving to listen to. The Fugue, which follows without a break after the first movement, is technically exact and at the same time exciting. The waltz which follows, reminiscent of the old German Landler, is amusing, and the performer can always grade the attentiveness of the audience by the ripples of laughter which greet it. The short Finale is a finger-breaker, at least in the tenor part (mine), capping the Suite with a ripple of notes at the end.

I suppose if one wished to find fault with Eric Leber's Suite one could say that the whole piece is indeed very difficult to play. It is definitely not for beginners or intermediates, and even the experts find there are technical problems, but there is little, if any music for the recorder or any other instrument which is both easy and worthwhile. It is my hope that the Suite will be published soon, so that recorder players everywhere can hear it and appreciate it as much as I do.

## *Dancing on The Green*

The weather forecasts for June 6th this year weren't too good in the Lehigh Valley. We were expecting about 100 people for the Durkee's Sixth Annual Dance Party and Picnic to start around noon time. The sun was shining all right in the morning and the sky was partly clear. Three times in the six years we have had the party we had to fall back on the Lodge Hall nearby. Now the Lodge Hall is cosy for 35 or 40 people but it would be crowded for the large group we've had the last two years.



The guests began arriving about noon from as far away as Long Island, Boston, New Jersey and Philadelphia. There were old and young, a few teen-agers and a couple of babies in their car beds. The little tots that ran around played happily, didn't get underfoot, and added to the gayety of the occasion.

We did English country dances, New England contras, square dances and had a Morris and Sword exhibition, without rehearsal. Russ Houghton directed the sword dance as he went along and was heard to say, "Now mooch right in there in that empty space." Some of the callers were Gay, Russ and Frances Houghton, Jessie MacWilliams, John Hodgkin, and Hank Croix for square dances. Ye host called "Hurry, hurry".

Some die-hards were playing recorders in the house accompanied by the Durkee's **virginal**. Coffee and punch were tucked away from time to time and the sandwiches that the guests brought came in handy in the intermissions.

We had gathered around the tables in the orchard to eat supper about 6 P.M. when a few drops of rain fell. The sky was black in the west. What to do! Stick it out or pick up and go to the Lodge Hall? Dave Bridgham, our weather man, got up, looked at the sky and said, "It'll go around.". Sure enough, it did. But three miles from here, there was a deluge.

So the fun went on until dark when the cars began to pull out for faraway places. A few of the above-mentioned die-hard recorder players stayed a little longer and we had an impromptu concert in the house.

This party is given each year at our house for the benefit of the Country Dance Society. Everyone was very generous and we were able to turn over \$90. Next year, we will try to have the dance around Memorial Day as the Partingtons always had good luck with the weather man at that time. Hope to see you then.

BERNICE J. DURKEE

## CENTER NEWS

**Boston, Mass.** Things are humming down East. So far this season the Boston group has had a Kick-off Party, which started the season off on October 3, at the Cambridge Y, a Halloween Party at the Union Boat Club, and a Harvest Party on November 14, again in Cambridge. But the high spot of the season was the Country Dance weekend at the Cardigan Ski Lodge, in Alexandria, New Hampshire, which was held late in September, with the Appalachian Mountain Club as

host. The club's lodge is near Newfound Lake on a hillside amphitheater facing Mt. Cardigan. The weather was superb, and the crisp, cool New Hampshire atmosphere at its best. Three groups hiked a bit, at Welton Falls, Firescrew Mountain, and Cardigan Mountain.

The dance program was full and kept 38 people busy, with a dance Friday evening, a dance party Saturday evening, and exhibition on Sunday of the dances learned in the classes, held Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning. Despite the program of square dances, contras, country dancing and morris, folks found time to stroll on the trails and hillsides, canoe on Newfound Lake, eat apples from Louise Chapin's orchard, swim or loll at the Cardigan pool, and (HORRORS!) nap and rest a bit.

The staff for the weekend included: Louise Chapin (director and teacher of country and morris), Hervey Gardiner (square dance caller), Irvin Davis (Country), Roger Pinard (violin), and Marianne Taylor (piano). On the Committee were Ken Crook and Martin Markham (A.M.C. - C.D.S. leaders), Edith Rankin (C.D.S. hostess and registrar), and Ellen Mandigo and George Fogg (refreshments). Ellen and George were at Pinewoods last August.

The Boston Center will hold its Christmas Party on Saturday, December 19, at the Old South Church. Later in the season are two events that promise to be exciting: A Mad Hatter Party (wear a mad hat) to be held on the Saturday after Easter, and the Walpole Party and picnic on June 4.

The Wednesday night classes are working out very well with dances that everyone can enjoy on first and third Wednesdays, and new and more challenging dances on the second and fourth Wednesdays. Beginners will be particularly happy on first and third Thursdays, and second and fourth Thursdays will feature guest callers.

**Brasstown, N.C.** The John C. Campbell Folk School, under the direction of Georg Bidstrup, has issued its 1960 calendar. Highspots include Handicraft Courses April 11 - 23, June 5 - 16, and a Recreation Course June 19 - 25. There are tentative plans for a four day recorder session to follow the Recreation Course.

A new course to be given this year is "Teaching Methods in Literacy," to train teachers to teach others how to teach adult illiterates to read. It will be run in connection with the "Literacy by Television" programs under the supervision of Mr. Mayes Behrman of the Folk School Extension Division.



**Chicago, Ill.** The Chicago Center, which meets at George Williams College, under the direction of Gretel and Paul Dunsing, is very active indeed. There are classes featuring English Country Dancing along with other folk dancing and there are four groups of recorder players meeting regularly.

One of the groups, the Hyde Park Recorder Consort, under Gretel Dunsing's direction, has given several concerts this season, one at the 19th Century Club in Oak Park, Ill., and another at George Williams College. The Consort includes, in addition to the recorders, a violincello and a classical guitar. Helene Alter, well known to those who attended the 1958 Pinewoods Music Camp, is also a member of the Consort and does much to give variety and beauty to the concerts and pleasure to practice hours. The group will give another concert in February, for the Main Branch of the Chicago Public Library.

Several of the dancers and recorder players are planning to attend the 1960 Pinewoods Dance and Music Camps. Gretel and Paul Dunsing will be at Pinewoods for all three weeks.

**Denver, Col.** The Sherwood Club, of Steele Community Center, Denver included several English Dances in programs it presented recently. Among them were the morris dances "Shepherd's Hey" and "Rigs of Marlow," and the country dance "Newcastle." The programs were given at the Public Library, for a luncheon of the Mile High United Fund, at an evening party of the Colorado Conference of Social Workers, and in several downtown locations during Denver's U. N. Day Celebration.

In October the Sherwood Club was privileged to have as guests at one of its regular meetings plus a pot-luck supper, a group of folklorists from Chile, in Denver for the National UNESCO Conference. The Chileans did several Latin American dances and songs, accompanied by guitar, then joined Sherwood in some of its international dances. They later asked leader Fay Ferree to teach these dances at a special session so they could record dance notes and music to use later in Chile. They said their favorite was the "Shepherd's Hey."

**Whitesburg, Ky.** THE FUTURE HOMEMAKERS OF AMERICA of Whitesburg, Ky. have the most fun of all, according to our correspondent, Miss Ann Dugan. She says:

"We meet once a month at different places and have a Pot Luck Meal and the finest fellowship and dancing. In case you don't know

about 'Pot Luck' just come to one of our meetings. Each one brings a food of some kind, with occasional strange results. Sometimes we have no dessert; another time bread is lacking. But we just go on and enjoy what we have.

"Our meeting at Hindman included the school -- teenagers. We had a sack lunch that day. It was a beautiful sight -- all seated on a mountain side, eating lunch, visiting with friends. I'm sending you two clippings from our paper."

The clippings, from The Mountain Eagle, follow:

"Ten schools including 157 students from this area were represented at a folk festival in Hindman on Saturday, where the day was spent in folk dancing, games, and singing folk songs. A picnic was enjoyed on the lawn of the Hindman Settlement School. Schools represented were Dlice Combs, Decoy, Pine Mountain, Home Place, Letcher High, Hindman, Clintwood, Va., Mountain View, Caney Creek Community and Whitesburg. The Whitesburg group was accompanied by Miss Ann Dugan, Miss Betty Little and Mr. Lee Cooper."

"Monday night, Oct. 5, the Folk game group met at the Whitesburg gymnasium for a potluck supper and an hour of folk dancing following the meal. School represented were Hazard, Amburgey, Stuart Robinson, Hindsman, Pine Mountain, and Whitesburg. Miss Capp, director of folk games, from Berea College, was the guest of the evening."

## I Remember Pinewoods

I remember many lovely places at which we have danced. I remember the Hudson Guild Farm in Andover, N. J., where we spent many lovely weekends . . . I remember the Durkees' country home in Bethlehem, Pa., and their wonderful garden . . . But best of all I remember Pinewoods and the wonderful times we had there last summer.

Of course, Pinewoods is wonderful every year, and the last one -- the freshest in your memory -- is always the best. But there are valid reasons why the first two weeks of the 1959 summer, the dance weeks, were especially exciting.

The biggest single factor was that the weather was almost unmitigatedly beautiful. Not only was the dancing delightful, but the swimming was delicious, and many were those who went in for pre-breakfast dips and post-midnight dunks.





Another factor was the fact that during both weeks we had a wonderfully congenial group, with numerous dancers of every degree of expertness so that all classes had plenty of dancers.

I could write at great length about each of the various features that made the summer. Instead, here are some random memories and thoughts:

Things I Didn't Know Before: I knew you could, and would, get "Morris legs" after the first few days... But I discovered you can also get . . . "Morris Fingers" (from enthusiastic, but misguided, stick striking) . . . "Morris ankles" (from boisterous and ambidextrous Trunkles) . . . "Parson's neck" (from the Farewell of the same name) . . . and "Wiltshire hand" (from the handshaking in the Wiltshire Reel).

Pinewoods New Personalities: John Bremer, the new, exciting, and witty teacher of morris and sword dancing . . . Bob Brundage, who called squares the second week (Dick Forscher called the first week) . . . the newlyweds -- Jim and Adrienne Grifferty, Bruce and Yutta Fauld, and Merlin and Cagey . . . Cagey, who never went anywhere without his gaily bedecked broom.

Entertainments: The evening entertainments by "volunteers" from Pinecones (Hi there, Rafferty), Nonesuch, Hunsdon House, and points south . . . I remember particularly the Hollanders' Eskimo Morris . . . and their song, "If All the World Were Blubber" . . . The "Fugue for One Recorder with Two Mouthpieces" played by those two virtuosi -- Eric Leber and the ubiquitous Phil Merrill . . . the unique Morris dance by Eric and Pete

Leibert, in which they substituted two short sticks for one long one . . . and fooled us all until the stick bent . . . The magnificent Thursday afternoon demonstrations . . . and the even more phenomenal Saturday morning spectaculars . . . The Wednesday (evening off) Lobster Roast at Sandwich Beach, with Bob Hider as Head Lobsterman, Ronnie Shrigley as Head Frisbie-er, and Ned Shrigley as Head Spectator of the battle for "King of the Hill."

Music: I remember the wonderful music that Phil and his aides made . . . Frances Jackson at the drums . . . A.C. King with her beautiful new accordion . . . the phenomenal recorder playing on Friday nights, particularly early in the evening . . . the time the humidity made every accordion in camp play a sour F, producing some of the weirdest country dance music this side of Dizzy Gillespie . . . and finally, I remember Sellenger's Round.

M.R.



### A Playford Puzzle

Newcastle; the Boatman; Black Nag; Jenny Pluck Pears; the Butterfly; Picking Up Sticks; the Maid Peeped out the Window; Broom the Bonny, Bonny Broom; Scotch Cap; The Merry, Merry Milkmaids; the Queen's Jig; the Phoenix; Up Tails All; Hunt the Squirrel; the Friar and the Nun; the Hole in the Wall; the Health ( or, the Merry Wassail ).



# The Four Seasons Consort

THE FOUR SEASONS CONSORT, directed by Eric Leber, presented a program of Renaissance, Baroque, and Modern Music at The City and Country School of New York City, on Saturday, November 14th and Sunday, November 15th.

The four friendly members of this sparkling group led their audience along their well-charted path, into, over, and round-about their happy choices. Each member, besides playing ensemble in deep collusion, was featured as a soloist of great brilliance. Eric Leber and Marleen Forsberg each played recorders and harpsichord; Martha Bixler played recorders and sang; Barbara Mueser, viola de gamba.

The combination of voice with recorder came through very effectively in Three Italian Villanellas of the 16th Century and later in Three Medieval Carols. The recorders, while illustrating their appeal as "singing" instruments, served also as melodic companions to Miss Bixler's fine singing; and her superb musicianship issued forth again from her alto recorder in the gay "Istampita," a medieval dance.

Miss Forsberg demonstrated her graceful mastery of the harpsichord in two keyboard duets of the Baroque period with Eric Leber, and as continuo in two D Minor Sonatas, by Handel and by Telemann.

Mr. Leber undertook the formidable recorder passages of both D Minor Sonatas, and played them with all the lilt of spontaneous music-making. When the company all joined in the interpretation of Suite No. 1 by Eric Leber, a niche was chipped into history. His work stands as an achievement of solid purpose, stated with elements of joy and humor.

One cannot avoid mentioning the physical handsomeness of this Consort. They are truly as pleasing to look at as to hear. The viola da gamba is itself a spell-binder, especially when played by a beautiful woman - and we had Miss Mueser, who, with remarkable intonation brought forth exquisite sounds from her lovely instrument.

The attendance both evenings was capacity. We very much hope that The Four Seasons Consort will make plans for their next appearance without delay.

JOSEPHINE V. GIARRATANO

## IN MEMORIAM

### ELIZABETH BURCHENAL

Elizabeth Burchenal died this November at the age of eighty-three after a long life of which much was spent in the service of folk music and dance. She worked for the New York City Board of Education from 1905 to 1916 and introduced folk dancing into the city schools. She founded the Mayday dancing for the schools in the parks of the city and so gave happiness to many children.

In 1916 she founded the American Folk Dance Society and devoted herself to the work of collecting and spreading knowledge of the contra and square dances of America and the dances of many of the peoples who together make up present-day America. There are many teachers today who owe the folk dance knowledge that they pass on to children, directly, or indirectly to Miss Burchenal. She had many friends in folklore circles and she will be much missed.

### KENNETH PRATT

"Kenny" was the friend of everyone - the dancers he danced with, the children he looked after in his school - he was universally loved. He had had a number of positions but during his later years he had found a simple life, in which he was happy - working with children and finding his friends among the dancers. He was perhaps most at home with American dancing but he loved Pinewoods, and whether American, English or Scottish dancing was going on, he was always there. We saw him last at Pinewoods towards the end of July and he left with a cheerful "see you at August Camp"; when we heard of his sudden death it seemed quite impossible that he would not be with us.

He was a member of both national C.D.S. and the Boston Center and as he was resident in the Boston area and danced regularly with the CDS Center, it is fitting that a memorial should be started there. We have received the following:

"To the C. D. S. members and friends of Kenneth M. Pratt:

"Copy of motion made at the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Country Dance Society, Boston Centre Inc. on September 15, 1959

"that a notice be sent to the membership with the first fall mailing, opening an avenue of contribution as a memorial to Kenneth Pratt. If enough is donated, it will be used for a public address system for the Society, otherwise to be used for such other special equipment as would further the interest



of the Society."

"A plaque will be attached to this equipment designating it as the Kenneth Pratt Memorial.

"Contributions may be sent to the Country Dance Society, 30 Pemberton Square, Boston 8, Massachusetts."

Contributions made by friends of Kenney Pratt at the national C.D.S. Camp at Pinewoods during August, have been forwarded to the Boston Center. Others will want to contribute to this memorial to a friend.

MAY GADD

## Welcome

We are delighted to welcome THE MIAMI VALLEY FOLK DANCERS as an Affiliated Group of the Country Dance Society of America. In our next issue we shall have news of the activities of this group from their leader, Grace Wolff, of Dayton, Ohio. Grace and her daughter Mary were two wonderful 1959 Pinewoods campers.

## Some Notes on the Language of Folk Song

Just as a child enjoys the repetition of a familiar story, so the folk who create and circulate folk songs and ballads find nothing objectionable, and no doubt something pleasant and comforting, in the repetitious use of familiar words and phrases. The lady's hand is always lily-white; the horse is always a milk-white steed; the lady's lips are rosy-red or ruby-red, her hair coal-black. "Valley," or "green valley," or "lonesome valley" occurs frequently, as do "dark hollow," "my true love," "silken gown," and "red, red wine," or "red, red rose."

Structural gaps are frequently filled with the meaningless "as you can plainly see." A great many songs (especially those of Irish origin) begin with "Come all ye," like the delightful "Bum Song" - "Come all you jolly jokers....," or "Casey Jones" - "Come all you rounders if you want to hear....," or "Come all you fair and tender ladies."

Except to a captious critic, there is, no doubt, nothing very reprehensible in these clichés; my point is that excessive repetition robs them of their original flavor. Perhaps they may be regarded as another expression of what I consider one of the definite qualities, or characteristics, of folk song - namely, naivete, or artlessness.

(Indeed, are not folk songs distinguished from "art" songs?) Also, a recognition of this defect, or limitation, in expression may serve as a salutary reminder of something that we folk song enthusiasts may easily forget - that the songs are not all inspired or full of superb folk poetry; some are dull, or pedestrian, or lifeless, at least in part.

As against this poverty of expression must be observed the converse fact that folk song also contains a grand variety of felicitous and vigorous phrases and expressions. In what follows I am, of course, expressing only my personal taste; there are no absolute standards in these matters. In mentally reviewing the folk songs I know, for examples in this area, I find so many clamoring for listing that I have had to reject ruthlessly, in order to stay within reasonable spatial bounds. (It has been fun!)

How could more be said in one line than in the immortal "He was her man, but he done her wrong" of Frankie and Johnny? The cowboy who, in "Strawberry Roan," tries to ride a bucking horse finds himself "sittin' on nothin' way up in the sky," and decides that "that sun-fishin' critter's worth leavin' alone."

Is not the following, from "Sir Andrew Barton," equal, in stark simplicity, to almost anything in conventional poetry?

"Ffight on, my men," sayes Sir Andrew Barton,  
"I am hurt, but I am not slaine;  
I'le lay me downe and bleed a-while,  
And then I'le rise and ffight againe."

(From "The Ballad Book," edited by MacEdward Leach).

Professor George Lyman Kittredge, the great ballad scholar, greatly admired "The Buffalo Skinners." No isolated phrases can convey its spirit; but vide "He fed us on such sorry chuck" and "Our hearts were cased with buffalo hocks, our souls were cased with steel."

From "Bahaman Lullaby," I like the following: (It sounds so much better sung!)

"If religion was a thing that money could buy,  
The rich would live and the poor would die.  
All my trials, Lord, soon be over."

In discussions of folk songs, negro spirituals are sometimes overlooked (I mean the earlier ones, not the recent variety like Sister Tharp's, that is all mixed up with "swing"



and "jazz"). They contain, to my ear, some splendid language. Some unknown genius referred to the Judgment Day as "that great gettin'-up morning." Others sang, "Death, ain't ya got no shame, shame?;" "Oh, bretheren, my way, my way's cloudy;" "Standin' in the need of prayer," and "Some fine day, about twelve o'clock, Dis ol' world am gonna reel and rock."

The song "On My Journey" (magnificently recorded by Paul Robeson) is, for me, a gem. Note this:

"I went into the valley, I didn't go to stay;  
But my soul got happy, and I stayed all day."

And the familiar "Swing Low, sweet chariot, comin' for to carry me home" is surely worthy of note in this connection.

#### FOLK ETYMOLOGY

As folk songs pass down through oral tradition, some of the words, particularly the less familiar ones, become corrupted, to the point, sometimes, of making no sense. (No doubt this is more likely to be true of the really old songs, like "Our Goodman" and "The Three Ra'ens" than it is of later ones). For example, in the song "Old Bangum," the line "Old Bangum drew his wooden knife" puzzled me, until I read a note to the effect that "wooden knife" is a corruption of "woodsman's knife." "Rockum shoes," in another song, can only mean "Morocco shoes;" in another "silverree" has replaced "silver grey"; in several versions of an old song, "the gipsum Davy" has replaced "the gypsy Davy." Another song now has "happy cure," evidently for "epicure."

On one of my records, an Irish singer sings "by the law, Harry..." and, not being familiar with the expression "by the lord Harry" (meaning the devil) he must have wondered who Harry is, there being no other reference to him in the song! On second thought, perhaps he hasn't wondered at all; I have an idea that, for the most part, those who sing folk songs from oral tradition, as distinguished from us who learn them from books, records, and concert singers, take these apparently outlandish or meaningless words or phrases as a matter of course, with the feeling that that's the way the song is sung, and no questions asked. Perhaps this is an example, or aspect, of the naivete I mentioned previously.

Other examples of verbal corruption, or folk etymology, could be adduced; perhaps it suffices to say that the corruptions and confusions take various forms.

MANUEL PRENNER

## Record Review

OUR SINGING HERITAGE (Vol. III) Folksongs Collected and Sung by Frank Warner (Elektra 153), in its geographical spread, content, and style, combines variety with authenticity hard to match in the plethora of folk song records of today.

These songs have been found by Frank and Anne Warner all the way from California to New England, with much of Frank's native South included. There is a rare song from Roanoke Island off North Carolina; a chantey picked up from Orient Point, Long Island, "We're Coming, Idaho" whose singer's family goes back from Cleveland to Missouri to Kentucky to Virginia; "Bold Archie", a rare full text of a Scottish Border ballad from Massachusetts, sung to a tune dating back to 1654. Many of the songs are of British origin, but most are unmistakably indigenous, like the "Fresh Peanuts" call from Virginia, the Comic "Fod", the lumberman's songs and the dance tunes. In the varied content - nonsense, satire, romance, exciting adventure, didactic preachment, conviviality, religious inspiration - the social historian would find substantial matter.

All this is authentic, but most authentic of all is Frank Warner's well-known variety of style. He does not imitate, as many folk singers of today are tempted to do; he projects his singers, by change of voice, pronunciation, attitude, personality, so that you could be persuaded that not one but several singers were here. He is the instrument through which Grammy Fish is brought to us with her flat, matter-of-fact style, Frank Proffitt with his mountain twang and curious glottal stop, the negro singer with his richness of color, the slightly inebriated lumberman of "Lewiston Falls", Yankee John Galusha from the Adirondacks, who is particularly impressive in the beautiful lament for the lost lumberman, as is the Roanoke Island singer of "Bony," who raises a broadside doggerel song to something noble and moving. These last two songs are unaccompanied by instrument, thereby possessing a special dignity. But Billy Faier's supporting virtuoso skill on guitar and banjo in several numbers offers added rhythmic variety and color.

All this variety is unified by the singer's love of the song, taste in selection, and friendliness for his informant, untouched, as are Anne Warner's excellent notes, by patronage or sentimentality.

EVELYN K. WELLS



IF YOU CAN WALK ...(continued from page 16)

Everybody laughs when Cy says "Let's stop; I'm tired!" and nobody feels old!

A letter of recommendation from Miss Mildred Priestley, Director of the Yorkville Neighborhood Club, Inc., sums up a series of sessions for their older members: "A Virginia Reel often found 20 to 25 in line, while it was not uncommon to see even more taking part in a circle dance. ...A grand march, weaving in and out through the recreation hall, saw many a beaming oldster hobbling along, sometimes cane-in-hand, but with evident satisfaction of taking part in the group activity."

Cy's work with the mentally retarded is as successful as with the oldsters. The dances must be quite modified and simplified, and one must give no-advance-instruction. These groups learn by imitation. "Bingo" and "7" Steps" are two of the dances he has used successfully with such groups aged 7-12 years.

For those of us who have seen Cy in action, his abundance of patience along with his relaxed and affable manner show clearly why his visits are anticipated and received with such enthusiasm. His wife, Adele, runs the record player and takes care of the "props". There is no confusing who the "gent" is: "red ribbons for the very peppy and green ribbons for the not so peppy" serve also to designate who's who if there are uneven numbers of men and women.

Cy has conducted Leaders' Training Courses and demonstrations for oldsters in Washington, Philadelphia, and White Plains, and for the mentally retarded at Teachers College, Hunter College, Willowbrook State Hospital, and just recently at the State Conference of the Council for Exceptional Children at the Vanderbilt Hotel.

As "Modified Folk and Square dancing" for the aged and the handicapped (the blind, the deaf, the mentally retarded) increases in popularity with these groups there is a continuing need for additional volunteers to act as Dance Leaders. If you are interested, contact Cy Grossman at ME. 5-0289 (811 Walton Ave., New York 51, N. Y.). He assures me that such community service is most satisfying. "And", he concluded, "For my own personal dancing pleasure I have always found the C.D.S. the nicest spot."

A.C.KING

## C. D. S. SALES DEPARTMENT

### GIFT SUGGESTIONS

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(New York Herald Tribune)

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