

THE COUNTRY DANCER

VOLUME 2

NUMBER 3

APRIL
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THIRTY
CENTS



Television Country Dance Evening

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THE COUNTRY DANCER

THE MAGAZINE OF THE COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY

Volume 2

APRIL 1942

Number 3

EDITORIAL

NEED OF AN AMERICAN C.E.M.A.

SINCE Miss Gadd's article and editorial comment on "The Arts in War Time" most unfortunate publicity for us has attached itself to the episode of Mayris Chaney and her large salary for teaching "folk dancing to children" at Government expense; and the idea abiding now in the minds of most people is that the O.C.D. was feathering the nests of its protégés for most unjustifiable purposes. Even if there was some fire in the smoke, one would doubtless find, as in many a fire insurance claim, that the smoke did more damage than the fire. Smoke, and the water poured upon it! At any rate, those of us who believe that it is a government responsibility to encourage if not to take over officially the recreation of a nation at war, must now work against new obstacles in public opinion. The extracts from letters of English folk-dance friends during the last two years bear witness to the place of dance and song among the arts, and the results of a constructive program for country-wide enjoyment and practice. The musical aspect of the work of the C.E.M.A. (Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts) is but one; equally stirring are the accounts of drama in the provinces and other things which nourish the life of the imagination and re-create the spirit of man. An excellent account of the attitude of the English government in this whole matter is to be found in Allan Nevins' *This Is England Now*. Can we, who know so well the re-creative nature of social dance and choral song, and who now confront a society made up of units rudely dislocated from their ordinary life (encampments of soldiers, defense workers and their families living in hastily assembled communities, ordinary citizens having to turn to new

forms of pleasure because of driving restrictions and lowered incomes, rural communities, children's groups, etc., etc.)—can we afford to miss a single opportunity to bring before people the delights of dancing and singing, and a chance to engage in those delights? From the February issue of "English Dance and Song" comes a paragraph on dancing school-boys who were living on a farm and digging potatoes. What about a little country dancing for all the college students who are being enrolled for farm work in America this summer? A stimulating recreation is going to be needed for the evenings. Dancing with the services is growing here already. New York and Boston parties always entertain service men, and doubtless many other groups. An interesting connection is made with English and American service men, in the various news items about the Canadian troops who apparently lend new life to English parties these days, often giving instruction in Canadian forms of American Square Dance.

EVELYN K. WELLS

NEW YORK GENERAL MEETING

Members of the Country Dance Society are reminded that a General Meeting of the Society—supplementary to the meeting held at Camp in August—will be held on Saturday, May 9th at 7:15 at the Russell Sage Foundation, 130 East 22nd Street, New York. Associate members who are interested in learning more about the Society are invited to attend, without voting powers. The meeting will be followed at 8:30 by a Party, which will be open to non-members.

MUSIC AND DANCE IN ENGLAND

"**L**IFE has its mitigations and one of these is music," writes Captain Wylie Kettlewell from England in October 1941. Most letters received show that the monotony of life under prolonged wartime existence is harder to bear than its dangers. That music and dance are encouraged as a means of relieving the deadening effect of this monotony is shown by the following extracts from letters received by Miss Evelyn Wells during the last two years from folk dance friends in England.

From Mrs. Kettlewell:

Oct. '40. "My chief job at the moment is entertainer in chief to Burford and all the troops we have here. A singsong every Sunday night in the Village Hall, a country dance class, an orchestra. This is such a surprise. Five fiddles, cello, viola, clarinet, oboe and flute, and all pretty good. We have given two concerts to packed houses and are continuing the series. Then I've just produced a play also for this concert, and help with a Pierrot troupe. This latter I hate but the soldiers like it."

Spring '41. "We are having a week-end school in Oxford and K. Barmby is kept busy trying to find rooms for all the people who want to come. Imogen Holst is taking the singing. She is now in charge of the whole of the south and west of England for the promotion of music and works under the C.E.M.A. and is making Oxford her headquarters for the next year. We are so pleased and she comes and helps us with our orchestra which goes from strength to strength. . . . I have quite a good country dance class now with a lot of high school girls evacuated here from a town in Kent. . . . They hope to carry out the May Morning celebration in Oxford and they have a men's team. M. Donington is going to play for them on her recorder. . . . You realise I expect that Lord Halifax was the Chairman of the E.F.D.S. International Festival in 1935—only he wasn't Lord Halifax then."

Nov. '41. "Imogen Holst is our new evacuee, she is in charge of C.E.M.A. for seven counties and makes this her headquarters, means a good bit of travelling for her. She is conducting my choir and orchestra at the moment. We are doing a broadcast from our big

room on Nov. 28 of Christmas music being rehearsed. They did a similar thing the other day with Reginald Jacques rehearsing a string orchestra in front of the mike. It means an awful disruption of the household, carpets up and the room turned right around and the kitchen full of gadgets for nearly a whole day. Let's hope it will be worth all the trouble."

January '42. "Imogen's work is really fine and she goes to all sorts of places to make people sing—schools, W.I. meetings, churches. In one place we went to, the W.I. ladies sat in the great hall and up above all around were wounded soldiers, who joined all the choruses of the carols with whistling,—a very jolly sound. We had one or two recorder-playing days. I was glad we had our broadcast. I do wish you could have heard Wylie. His Somerset Carol was the real thing. Even the B.B.C. engineers approved."

From Captain Kettlewell:

October '40. "Peggy is local leader in what is known as the Women's Voluntary Service, which does all the other things from billeting through waste collection to communal jam making. Her principal activities have been the latter, but she finds time to run the women's institute, and an orchestra as well, the orchestra meets weekly and varies from twelve to sixteen. It is almost first-class and can tackle anything. There is to be a concert in the big hall of the Grammar School next month.

June, '41. "Engel (Lund) is to give a concert here in Burford next month under some organization of which Imogen Holst pulls the strings, and which brings celebrities to the countryside instead of country dwellers having to go up to London. . . . The Morris men were out at Bampton yesterday with Billy Wells in his accustomed place for the 54th year in succession! He was quite cheerful and played away as of yore, but he wore a coat over his white suit and I was glad to have an overcoat on. I was asking how they managed to 'field' two teams, and the answer was that all the dancers who were neither too old nor too young for military service, were agricultural workers, and so exempted."

TO SQUARE DANCE CALLERS

Ralph G. Page

SO you are going to be a square dance caller. Ah! The confidence of youth. I too, once thought it was as easy as that. A lot of people think that all a caller has to do is to have a lot of nerve, a good memory, and a loud voice. If it only was as simple as that.

Many people resent advice. Especially the unasked for variety. Accordingly the following rules of conduct will probably be lightly cast aside and as quickly forgotten as last year's weather.

1. Don't drink on the job.
2. Be able to do the dances well yourself. The better dancer you are the better caller you ought to be.
3. Don't allow your parties to degenerate into brawls.
4. Keep your temper. Smile, even if it kills you to do so.
5. Have patience. Remember that you had to learn them once.
6. Don't call dances that are beyond the ability of most of your dancers.
7. Don't talk too much. People came to dance, not to listen to you chant a mess of doggerel.
8. Admit a mistake. Laugh at it, and don't let it get your goat. Remember that the person who never makes a mistake, is the person who never does anything.
9. Practice. Practice. Practice.
10. Never be satisfied with just getting by.

Nowadays a caller is many things. Master of ceremonies, Host, Music director, Bouncer, Floor director, and, if necessary, Teacher. I was extremely fortunate in having an uncle who steered me around many of the pitfalls in the road, and who had a sympathetic understanding of a novice's woes and tribulations. Some of the above rules are his.

It sounds like preaching, and it should not be necessary to have to say it, but it may be that the biggest obstacle in your path will be liquor. Never, under any circumstances, take a drink when you are calling. You will be told that you call twice as good when you are half drunk as you do when you are sober. Maybe you think so yourself, and if you do, get it out of your

head right now, once and forever. You only think so. Actually your calling stinks. The reputation of being a drunken caller will cost you ten times the number of jobs you will get from it. It just doesn't make sense.

Practice. At first get a group of your friends—just enough for one set, and go to work on them. They will praise you, of course, being your friends, and a little praise at the beginning is wonderful medicine. Whenever anybody suggest a square dance, that is your cue to step forward and say, "Sure. I can call a couple." From there on you are on your own. Take any job offered. Church socials, club or lodge meetings, kitchen junkets, private parties, any where at all, up to the limit of your ability, for money or for fun. You will learn more from a year of such experience and by making mistakes, than from all the learned treatises you could read in a month.

Call the dances to yourself during the day. Take the kings and queens from a pack of playing cards and use them in working out new changes. I have called square dances more years than I care to remember, and I still call them to myself a dozen times a day. The best time of the day for me is right after I have gone to bed. Especially when trying to find the right tune for a certain new change. They stick in my memory better then. Also it is far more effective than counting sheep.

Don't be a copy-cat. It is well enough to take another caller's changes and use them if you find them interesting. But that is far enough. Let the other fellow have his own little rhymes and mannerisms. They are a part of his stock in trade and belong to no one else—I hope.

If you are lazy, or are jealous and envious of other people's success, then shun the idea of being a caller. There are more heart aches and disappointments in music than in any other profession on God's green earth. If you can't take them with a smile—no matter how rueful—and if you can't wish the other fellow good luck and mean it, then you have no place in it, and the sooner you get out the better for everyone, including yourself most of all.

Few people realize that square dance calling

has anything to do with music. A little thought will tell you differently. You are surrounded by music and are a vital cog of it. You must call the changes with the rhythm of the dance. You must pitch your voice to harmonize with the tune. The more you know about music the easier all this will be, and so much easier for the dancers to follow you. If you live in New England where they do a lot of contra dances, then you must give the calls ahead of the beat, and that really requires some sort of musical background.

It ought to be required of every caller, before he ever calls one dance, to serve an apprenticeship of ten years as a square dancer. If you can't do the dance yourself, how can you ever hope to unscramble a bunch of beginners when they have mixed up one of your pet calls?

Get a note book and write down your dances exactly as you call them. List the names of the tunes you like to have played for each number. Make a duplicate copy to take on every job. I have known callers who keep a square dance diary. Every job is set down. The dances called and how received, etc. If you are of such a turn of mind it will help. At least it will be interesting reading sometime.

There is plenty of room at the top, as in everything else. There is also plenty of room part way up the ladder, for as yet the field is not overcrowded. Some of this advice may be hard to take. That is true of most advice. Nothing has been sweetened. Nothing has been given in rancour.

If your mind is set on being a square dance caller, and nothing that I have said has discouraged you, then here is my hand, and the wish of plenty of good fortune. Let nothing discourage you. Neither the jeers of scatter brained jitterbugs nor the "I told you so" of false friends. American folkways is something real and tangible and you will be a bigger man for being a part of it. Keep it clean and leave it better than you found it.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

RALPH PAGE is too well known as a very popular caller in New Hampshire and Massachusetts to need any introduction. His book—*THE COUNTRY DANCE BOOK*—written in collaboration with BETH TOLMAN, has become a standard work.

TELEVISION ADAPTS TO WARTIME

AN up-to-the-minute invention such as Television would naturally be readily adaptable to changing conditions and the latest programs of the Columbia Broadcasting System show that the Directors are fully aware of its possibilities. This is especially shown in the Wednesday Country Dance hour.

These programs are now being presented in the form of a square dance evening for service men. Each week four sailors and four soldiers are invited—through the agency of the New York City Defense Recreation Committee—to come to the Party. The invitation includes dinner before the show, so that by the time we reach the studio everyone is all ready to join in with whatever is being offered. A short preliminary practise is held in order to speed up the dances for the sake of the audience—but the whole program is extremely informal. We now have three sets dancing at the same time—and plenty of space for them. They are led by four experienced Country Dance Society couples, who also give several exhibition dances. In addition to these couples we provide eight girls as partners for the service men. The girls all have some experience of square dancing, so that they are able to give help to their partners. It is their responsibility also to steer their partners quickly to their places when sets are formed, so that there are no awkward pauses. Twice during the evening everyone gathers round the piano and joins in with singing led by Kay Thompson, who also acts as Master of Ceremonies for CBS.

Most of the men who accept the invitation are attracted by the combination of dinner and the chance to see a television studio—very few know what country dancing is like before they come. But almost invariably we hear at the end of the evening that they have had more fun than during any other evening in New York. The photographs on this page and on the cover show that they get right into the swing of the dances.

We have had some hectic evenings—notably one when fashion models came to give a song and dance act and doubled as partners for the soldiers and sailors. When neither girls nor men know the dances and the time spent on teaching must be kept down to a minimum, anything is likely to happen. However, that evening had its

points, and on the whole they have gone very smoothly, with everyone finding his way around with little difficulty.

Entertainers on the program before general singing was introduced, have included Agnes de Mille, who danced with great finish and humour; woodchoppers from the forests of Maine and New Hampshire, who were in New York for the Sportsman's Show and who brought enormous logs to the studio and chopped through them with amazing rapidity; Margaret Johnson and her Song-Spinners, who sang old songs of the South and the West; Joe Sodja came with his banjo and guitar and proved to

be equally accomplished on either; Lou Leonard gave a demonstration of Jiu-jit-su first with a pupil and then with a soldier, in which he tactfully took all the falls; and Michael Chimes demonstrated harmonica playing, and then handed out harmonicas to the service men and created an accompaniment by means of instructions to either "blow" or "draw."

After reading an account of television experiences in Philadelphia (to appear in our next issue), we are increasingly thankful that the fluorescent lights used by CBS are cool and make special make-up unnecessary.

MAY GADD



"Do-si-do with your corners all"

TRADITIONAL AND PLAYFORD DANCES

Helen Kennedy

MANY people in the E.F.D.S. are asking why the English Traditional and American Square Dances are having such a vogue. Some who have revelled in Playford for so many years have twinges of regret and even of resentment at this. To understand the reasons we have to recall the history of social dancing during the last fifty years. For much of that time many traditional country dances lay dormant or at any rate were unknown outside their immediate locality.

In the Ballroom before the last War, the Waltz, the Polka and the Galop still figured in dance programmes. The dancing was energetic and whole-hearted. The men had often to change collars twice or three times in the course of the evening. The ladies tried to combine an appearance of coolness, by carrying a fan, with an air of dignity, by the dexterous manipulation of a train looped over a finger.

At this time the professional dance element encouraged a terrible pseudo-gracefulness of the most artificial kind. It was this artificiality that Cecil Sharp and the E.F.D.S. had first to combat in Country Dancing. People would posture and point their toes. Wrists would protrude in every ring. Bodies wriggled and a superficial smile appeared at fixed moments on the faces. The prevailing idea of the female peasant was of a slightly naughty, coquettish minx who placed her hands coyly on her hips, elbows well protruding, and who ogled her partner over her shoulder at every opportunity. How often had Cecil Sharp to caricature this false idea of gracefulness in his pioneering days? Compare this with the standard of the professional dancers of today.

The Ballroom also has seen many changes in these years. The introduction of American Jazz, with the insistent rhythm of its music, throttled the jollity and sociability natural to the Ballroom of earlier days. The programmes catered only for the couple and this insistent rhythm doped the pair into a kind of emotional trance.

During this period of transition in the Ballroom from sociability to a realistic but definitely non-social form, the E.F.D.S. was busy re-

viving a dance of great beauty which had been the social dance of three hundred years ago. Cecil Sharp was convinced that the intricate patterns and exquisite melodies of Playford were much too good to be left sleeping within the pages of a book. The E.F.D.S. with its growing organization and infectious enthusiasm succeeded in bringing these dances to a large number of English people. But even if appreciated by those, the dances were never enjoyed by the masses. In fact, a definite prejudice grew up against Country Dancing. For some the dances were spoiled at school; others were put-off by inferior demonstrations or by an over-serious and academic teaching presentation. As someone's Aunt said in *Punch*: "Folk dancing was too brainy and breathy." Nevertheless, in spite of failure to attract the many, the seed was widely sown and had its effects. One of these was the encouragement given to the local traditional and "old-fashioned" set dances that had been dormant. These began to re-appear spontaneously in local village dances and were collected through the agency of the E.F.D.S. and its Branches. They became at once generally popular among folk dancers.

What are the qualities of these freshly revived Traditional dances that were given a new lease of life? Some had been in the E.F.D.S. repertoire almost from the start for Cecil Sharp had published a collection in his *Country Dance Book I*. Yet these *Book I* dances had never ousted the later Playford dances from favour. It was more a question of change of fashion. People in the Ballroom were tiring of the couple dance. There was a growing desire for more of the sociability that can only be given by the group dances. The *Palais Glide* and *Lambeth Walk* sprang into popularity for just this reason. The Traditional set dances are on the whole simpler in figure and make less demands on memory and technique than do the Playford dances. They allow for interplay with partner and other dancers. In fact, the gap between the Ballroom and the Country Dance, which is very wide if it is a matter of Jazz and Playford, is narrowed almost to vanishing point when one

turns from the Palais Glide to the Traditional dances. The E.F.D.S. has now the material to effect such a transition and there is evidence that it is the kind of material which is becoming more acceptable. It has been noticed lately at the various socials the E.F.D.S. provides that a man walks into a Traditional dance without any of the self-consciousness at one time so prevalent. Provided that the programme consists mainly of Traditional dances, then Playford dances such as Hunsdon House or Oranges and Lemons take their place naturally once the "gap" has been bridged.

Since this war began we have proved by experiment that all that is now needed to run a successful social with a mixed gathering of the uninitiated is an effective M.C. or "Caller" and good stirring music. There is no longer any reason for a country dance social to consist mainly of women so long as there are men in the actual vicinity. Nor is there any need for the great wealth of Playford Dances to be shelved. As an increasing public becomes accustomed to the simpler form of set dance, a proportion will become ripe for the wealth of beautiful and intricate Playford dances requiring a more polished and expert skill of movement. They will dance these all the more effectively if their first introduction to set dancing has given them the sense of natural unself-conscious gaiety, the real basis of the artistic quality, so often lacking in "Playford" dancing.

Playford dances are like Madrigals. They will be enjoyed most in small, select clubs or gatherings, where unity is more easily achieved. Both types of dances have their place in the aims and objects of the E.F.D.S.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mrs. Kennedy's article was originally written for the February issue of ENGLISH DANCE AND SONG. As the C.D.S. also has been giving much consideration to the respective places of Playford and traditional dances (both American and English) in our repertoire, we obtained permission to reprint it here.

C.D.S. SPRING FESTIVAL

The National Festival of the Country Dance Society will be held in New York at Hunter College (auspices of the Department of Physical Education) on the evening of Saturday, April 25th. Although automobile restrictions will cut down the numbers attending from out-

side New York, many of the Society's affiliated Centers are sending groups and several hundred dancers are expected. This year the Festival will be in two parts. Part One is the display section in which participation is limited to groups who can perform the dances without direction, and who register in advance. Morris and sword, American and English country dances, appear in this section of the program, which will run from 8:15 to about 10 o'clock. Part Two will run from 10 to 12 and will take the form of a Country Dance Party in which the audience can participate. The program will consist of dances in which all can join with a minimum amount of instruction.

NATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL

This Festival will once again be held in Washington, from May 6th to 9th, and early reports indicate that in spite of travelling difficulties, large numbers of participating groups are expected. This year for the first time a New York performance will be held. On Monday, May 11th, afternoon and evening programs will be given at Madison Square Garden, sponsored by the New York Post Folk Festival Association. A limited number of the groups appearing at the Washington Festival will be selected to come to New York, and they will be supplemented by representative groups from New York City and State.

There will be massed displays of American and of English Country dances—each interlude occupying about ten minutes. May Gadd is Chairman of this massed dance section, co-operating with Ed Durlacher in the American dance display. Two squares of different types, and one contra dance will be shown, and over sixty sets are expected to be on the floor. The dances will be called by Mr. Durlacher. In the English dance section a morris dance will be given in the evening and a sword dance in the afternoon, together with two country dances. Participation in either of these displays is open to any group willing to co-operate with the very simple requirements made. Any group that wishes to take part and has not yet received an invitation should apply to the New York Post Folk Festival Association, 75 West Street, New York, or to Miss May Gadd, The Country Dance Society, 15 East 40th Street, New York.

THE C.D.S. IN WARTIME

MANY amateur organizations find that the war has produced conditions which make them no longer indispensable to society. In the case of the C.D.S. it is quite the opposite. More than ever the civilian population needs the type of recreation to be found in country dancing. There is also opportunity for organizing it in the military camps and in the communities which have sprung up in the defense industrial areas.

The C.D.S. has always run as a non-profit making organization, requiring classes to run as self-sustaining units. The work of the National Society has of necessity been limited, as it has had to depend for funds on membership fees and any surplus from the summer camp. The war, with its accompanying taxation and rise in living costs, has cut in on the income of the Society. Without more adequate financial support the C.D.S. cannot meet the increasing demands made upon it. The Executive Committee has cut expenses to the limit but it feels that the secretary and the national office should be kept in order to carry on essential routine work and to act as a clearing house for information. *But one or both of these will have to go unless further funds are raised.*

The following plans for fattening the budget have been worked out.

1) DRIVE FOR NEW MEMBERS .

*Associate Membership	\$ 1.00
Regular Membership	\$ 3.00
Contributing Membership	\$ 5.00
Supporting Membership	\$10.00
Sustaining Membership	\$25.00

All members receive THE COUNTRY DANCER free of charge.

Contributing, Supporting and Sustaining members receive also ENGLISH DANCE AND SONG (6 issues a year) which is the official magazine of the English Folk Dance and Song Society in England.

2) NATIONAL COUNTRY DANCE PARTIES

Each Center and Affiliated Group is being asked to co-operate by giving a "National" Party in May, and to send the proceeds to the National Society.

3) INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Individuals who believe in the work of the Society and want to see it carry on are being asked if they can help with contributions.

There are certain basic expenses that must be covered in advance if we are to continue to function as a national society. These are estimated as follows:

Rent	\$25.00 a month
Light	\$ 2.50 " "
Telephone	\$12.00 " "
Secretary	\$79.66 " "
Stamps and Stationery	\$20.00 " "

This last sum does not include stationery and stamps used for special activities—Camp, Festival, Classes, etc.

If, for each of the above expenses, twelve individuals can be found who will guarantee the needed amount for one month, the office and the secretary would be assured for the year (sixty people needed to guarantee sums of varying amounts).

Plans for a second method of budgeting have also been made. Estimates show that when we add other necessary running expenses to those given above we need about \$5 for each day of the year. There are only 365 days in the year. It would seem that we are not attempting the impossible if we work to find 365 people who will each be responsible for one day. We can surely do it, if all of our national and center members will share the responsibility of finding these supporters. If anyone can take more than one day, we shall get there all the sooner. Anyone who can only take part of a day can perhaps combine with other people to make up a whole day.

It is hoped that when you read this article you will pause for a moment and ask yourself the following questions:

1. What does the C.D.S. mean to me?
2. How can our dancing be made available to others?
3. What part do I want the C.D.S. to play in wartime recreation?

* Does not carry voting privileges.

4. How much can I contribute to the work of the Society (even 2 or 3 cents buys a postage stamp!)

The Committee realises that not everyone can contribute large or even small donations, but it is the united effort that will keep us in action. *Everyone can help by getting new contributors interested in the work of the C.D.S.* Quick action is needed as we *must* budget in advance. Offices and secretaries cannot be engaged on a day-by-day basis. Send your contribution—for one day, several days, or part of a day to THE COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY, Inc., 15 East 40th Street, New York, N. Y.

MARGARET STANLEY-BROWN
Chairman C.D.S. Executive Committee

1942 SUMMER CAMP

The Country Dance Camp will be held as usual at Pinewoods Camp, Long Pond, and this year will offer special facilities for training in wartime recreation work. A program of dances suitable for use in camps, clubs, and defense centers will be taught and it is hoped that it will be possible to give a practical application of their use by inviting soldiers from near-by camps to attend some of our Country Dance evenings. In planning this program the problem of "different versions" will receive special consideration. Trained leaders for defense recreation work are urgently needed and those who train this summer can be of real service next winter.

The Camp will continue to offer the restful and yet stimulating vacation needed by people who are now working at extra pressure. Transportation offers a problem this year but trains and buses will be running, and by careful planning we shall be able to take care of meeting people at Plymouth and Buzzards Bay. The dates are—General Session: August 15th to 29th—Teachers' Course: August 30th to September 3rd. Folders giving full details are now ready. Apply to THE COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY, 15 E. 40th St., New York.



Too bad —
lost his head
completely doing "Newbiggin" one day!

DANCE WEEKEND

June 26 to 28 at Pinewoods Camp. For details apply to the C.D.S. Boston Center, 87 Beacon St., Boston, Mass.

BOSTON VISIT

Our spring season in Boston began this year with a welcome visit from Miss May Gadd, our National Director. Her visits to us are too few, and we have been delighted that she could see what we are doing, and meet our members, who ought to know her better than they do.

Miss Gadd arrived in Boston on Thursday afternoon, March 19, and went at once to a supper party given in her honor by Mr. and Mrs. Philip Sharples of Cambridge. Then the whole company proceeded to Belmont and an American square dance party, with Ralph Page of Nelson, New Hampshire, whom Miss Gadd had long wished to meet and hear, as caller. This series of dances, held every other week, has proved a great attraction throughout the winter.

On Friday morning, Miss Gadd had an opportunity of visiting the Shady Hill School, and talking with some of the people there who are interested in country dancing. A "dancing assembly" was held under the direction of Everett Smith with the younger children dancing in one room and a very large group of older boys and girls in another. In the evening there was the regular monthly party of the Boston Center, in the gymnasium of the Windsor School, where Miss Gadd received with the hostesses. There were about 175 dancers present; in connection with a demonstration, Miss Gadd danced a morris jig; at the intermission she gave a short talk in which she explained the work of the National Society, and asked for more active support for it from individuals and groups outside New York.

On Saturday evening, Miss Gadd visited Miss Louise Chapin's square dance group in Lincoln. On Sunday afternoon she attended a tea given in her honor by Mrs. William DeLancey Howe of Cambridge; after tea Miss Gadd conducted a discussion on the possible contribution of the Country Dance Society to civilian and military recreation in war time, and the relation of the Society to the OCD, USO, and other organizations. Various questions were asked concerning teaching methods and the use of different types of music. After dinner, Miss Gadd met some of the members of the Boston Center for informal discussion on the financial problems of the National Society.

Monday morning Mrs. Malcolm McNair of Cambridge and New Hampshire, led a discussion of American dance tunes, dance notation,

and caller's technique. In the afternoon, Miss Gadd was given tea at the Center headquarters, and attended Miss Chapin's morris class there. After dinner she conducted a teaching conference on English Country Dancing for a small group at which one of the visitors was Louise Andrews Kent, of Kent's Corner, Vermont. Mrs. Kent is interested in the Plainfield, Vermont, Festival. Fortunately she arrived in time to enjoy watching Step Stately, Fandango and The Bishop. Miss Gadd finished just in time to catch her train to New York. We trust that she did not feel that we have overworked her; the Boston Center has been honored by her visit, and hopes it may soon be repeated.

ALEXANDER HOYLE

COURSE AT BRASSTOWN, N. C.

The John C. Campbell Folk School, Brass-town, N. C. is offering its usual courses for recreation leaders in American, English, and Danish dances, play party games and songs. The beginners' course is from June 1st to 6th; for more experienced dancers from June 8th to 13th. The courses are organized by Marguerite Butler Bidstrup; Mrs. Campbell will be in charge of the singing and of the discussions concerning the place of music and dance in the whole scheme of country and of city life, which are such an important part of this course; May Gadd will take charge of teaching the American and the English dances; George Bidstrup of the Danish dances; Philip Merrill of the music. This is another valuable opportunity for those wishing to train for wartime recreation work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Once again our thanks are due to the Columbia Broadcasting System for permission to use photographs taken in the television studio during the Country Dance Society's program. Miss Genevieve Vaughan-Jackson of the New Haven Center has given us another amusing cartoon. This time it represents the hazards of engaging in sword dancing—or does she intend to convey the state of mind of the novice who finds himself involved in an apparently inextricable confusion of entangled swords?

NEWS FROM REGIONS AND CENTERS

BOSTON On February 13th the Boston centre held a Square Dance for the benefit of the Centre. Ralph Page, New England's well-known caller, came with his orchestra and conducted a most successful evening. About 190 dancers came from Boston and vicinity and even from as far away as Worcester, Massachusetts. The enthusiasm was such that the Centre hopes to have another Square Dance in April or May.

The Boston Centre is looking forward to a visit from Miss May Gadd at the time of its next country dance on March 20, 1942.

NANCY TUCKER

LEXINGTON, KY. On February 20, Lieut. M. G. Karsner, Director of the Lexington Folk Dance Center, reported to medical replacement center Camp Joseph T. Robinson, Arkansas. On February 14th the Lexington Center entertained with a party in Mr. Karsner's honor which all of the members attended. Guests included Miss Pauline Ritchie, who sang "The Riddle Song" and "I Wonder When I Shall Be Married," and Mr. Pryce Tutt.

Mrs. Raymond McLain has been asked by several civic organizations in Lexington to talk on "Folk Dancing and Defense." Mrs. McLain is serving on Lexington's Training Course Committee of Civilian Defense and is setting up training courses in Folk Dancing with leaders from the Lexington Folk Dance Center. These courses will be set up in Lexington and in the county. One of the courses will be at Avon, a signal corps station, which has brought several thousand persons to Lexington.

A business meeting for all members of the Lexington Folk Dance Center was held on March 14th at the University of Kentucky.

Mrs. McLain led a discussion on (1) The work of the Country Dance Society and its affiliated Centers in the United States, and (2) The Mountain Folk Festival to be held in Berea, Kentucky, April 9-11.

A report was given by Miss Lovaine Lewis on (1) The mechanics of the Lexington Folk Dance Center and its future plans, and (2) Training Courses in the East and South available for leaders of Folk Dancing.

The Center is now concentrating its efforts

on the dances which are to be done at the Mountain Folk Festival. Eight couples will attend from Lexington.

LOVAINE LEWIS

MONTCLAIR, N. J. We are carrying on, but with some falling off in average attendance, traceable to war conditions and the obligations it involves for many. Activities continue along the general lines referred to in the November and January issues.

On February 19th our regular evening was devoted to a Costume Party with 36 present. A deal of ingenuity was displayed in the depicting of dance titles and movements by costume, head-dress, or emblem. They ran the gamut from *Mr. Beveridge's Maggot to Wind Up the Ball of Yarn*, in alphabetical order! Lack of space forbids detailed description of all, but a few stand out in memory. One of these was *Whirligig*; the head-dress portraying it being a revolving phonograph record with small dancing figures attached. Another was *Steamboat*, the main feature of which was a funnel-shaped head-gear with the addition of a whistle for atmosphere. Two people chose *If All the World Were Paper*—one being carried out in the patriotic theme of red, white and blue, and the other a smart number consisting of a slashed skirt and bolero jacket. *Hull's Victory* was ingeniously portrayed by one lady wearing an apron with a V-shaped pocket, on which were strawberry hulls, plus a head-dress which also incorporated the 'V for Victory' motif. One which was very apropos of the times in which we are now living, was *Soldier's Joy*. The wearer had fashioned a dress of postman blue material, on which were stuck stamped, addressed envelopes, the whole being topped by a jaunty service cap.

MARY AND ROBERT BUCKIE

PHILADELPHIA Our first steps in television, taken just after receipt of the last Country Dancer with its cover showing the New York Group, are chronicled elsewhere in this issue (we hope). We, and Hale America, seem to go from one extreme to the other as our previous demonstration for them was on the mile-wide stage of Convention Hall, where

our measly five sets of Black Nag were hardly within hailing distance of one another, and our Sellenger's Round felt like a wedding ring in the ocean. In the latter, by the way, we really distinguished ourselves. Someone on the balcony apparently threw a switch and disconnected the music. After a momentary gasp we started singing and kept right on going. The sound-effects man (using some of his more lurid ones) located the offender by telephone, and got the music back on. Fortunately the disc had been left spinning with the needle on and it caught us, nearly a movement further on, only about a quarter step off.

Our spring has been high-lighted by most successful parties in Germantown in January and in Swarthmore in February. Unfortunately the former coincided with one of the New York parties, so the accompanist, Philip Merrill, was the only one from further than Wilmington and Trenton. The Germantown gym was as well filled as usual, and there seemed to be about the same number in the Swarthmore Field House, huddled in one end of its vastness.

Our groups continue as numerous as ever. One of the most recent is an all square dance group in Wyncote, formed by Mr. and Mrs. F. Raymond Wadlinger, after they had seen and done some dancing last summer, and led by John Hodgkin.

The Germantown Parent-Teachers Group has continued this spring, and has had considerable enjoyment in dancing to the new Columbia Square Dance records with calls (Album C-47)—this is also a relief to the caller's throat!!

Mary Baxter's class in Media is reported doing well, and appears to have been attracting the navy.

Isolated evenings of dancing have been held as far afield as Horsham, Pa., and Mickleton, New Jersey. In Philadelphia the trend toward American Square during the last few months has been very marked. There is still a large opening for a few more good Square Dance records—without calls!

RUTH HODGKIN

PLAINFIELD, N. J. The Center has continued to hold its monthly Saturday Square Dance Evenings. Attendance has been affected by pressure of war work but picked up at the last meeting on April 11th when a large number turned out and a

most successful evening was held. The next meeting will be on Saturday, May 2nd at the Wardlaw School Gymnasium at 8:30 p.m.

CLARISSA WELLS

NEW YORK AREA Attendance on both Thursday and Friday evenings has picked up considerably after the first falling-off due to defense training activities. Bi-monthly Saturday Country Dance Parties have been well attended and we have been delighted to welcome a number of service men. Leaders for single dance evenings are much in demand both with and without a demonstration set. One feels that a great many people around here ought to know something about country dancing before long.

GODDARD COLLEGE WEEKEND

A particularly delightful feature of the January to February weekend school at Goddard College, Plainfield, Vermont, was the enthusiastic attendance of the young people of the village, in addition to the teachers, WPA recreation workers and others who were present. The teaching of the local American and the English dances was carried on by Emerson Lang and several assistants. Mrs. John Gould arranged comfortable accommodations at the college for all who did not live in Plainfield.

A delightful party was held on Saturday evening with a local woman caller providing a special interest. A heavy snowstorm kept away some of the expected visitors, but some did get through and it was difficult to see how any more people could have found room on the floor. The storm also enabled the college to fulfil its promise of combining dancing with skiing—there was plenty of snow on Sunday morning!

MAY GADD

SQUARE DANCE RECORD

The Blackberry Quadrille (Victor record 36403A) is recommended to those people who are looking for good square dance music without calls. *Soldier's Joy* (also without calls) is on the other side. It is to be found in a Square Dance Album called "Woodhull's Old Time Masters." All the other records in the album have calls, but "The Blackberry Quadrille" can be purchased singly, if desired.

BOOK REVIEW

WESTERN SQUARE DANCES, by J. McNair. Published in Denver, Colorado, by the Oran V. Siler Co. \$1.00.

This is an attractively bound handbook of Western Calls with reproduced typewritten instructions. The bright yellow cover has a swirling couple suggesting a connection between the motion of "Partners swing" and that of the cowboy's lariat.

Inside, the book is illustrated by sketches which show the positions clearly, although the figures used are on the grotesque side. A few sketches of shooting cowboys and two-gun Annies are thrown in for good measure. The author's foreword reads as follows: "The object of this book is to present what the author considers to be the thirty favorite square dances of this western country in the sequence of their ease in mastering; with instructions and suggestions for their performance. In addition to this, certain background notes are offered so as to give the beginner in square dancing a feeling of reality and authenticity. If anyone, through reading this book, discovers the enjoyment in responding to the rhythm and color of the old time square dance, its aim will have been achieved."

The author differentiates between "call" and "call line." The latter refers to any one part of a figure, while the former refers to a complete dance. He explains that in *his* part of the country a complete dance, or call, consists of an "opener," then the main "figure" and finally an "ending." When the main figure is repeated more than once it is generally followed each time by a "filler" which is danced by all the couples together. Most openers are essentially the same and it is merely a little dance variation or change in the wording which makes them different. This applies also to fillers and endings.

For this reason the author gives different openers, fillers and endings only for the first ten dances and instructs you to select any of these ten, in any combination, for the remaining twenty dances. The main figure is different in each of the thirty dances. He points out also that these figures are interchangeable, and that in these days the same figure is not always led

by each couple in turn; the first couple may lead "Shoot the Owl," the second "Birdie in the Cage," the third "Duck for the Oyster" and the fourth "Swap and Swing"; however in the old days the same figure was always led by each couple.

Three singing calls are given, with appropriate tunes at the end of the book, but the remainder, although usually rhymed, are of the chanted variety with which dancers of the Kentucky Running Set are familiar. The caller can use his judgement concerning the amount of music allowed for each movement—"Stay just ahead of the dancers in your call. Do not hurry them however, and be sure never to get behind them or they will be forced to 'jump' your call." Other helpful hints for Callers are: "Make the rhythm of your call fit in with the rhythm of the music so that the strong beat in both can be heard at the same time . . . enunciate clearly and crisply"—and there are many others which you will find in the book.

Mr. McNair states that he has found it helpful in teaching to use names instead of numbers for the different couples in a set and that he considers that this also makes for clarity in writing down the figures. Therefore throughout the book you will meet the first couple in each dance as *Andy* and *Amy*, the second as *Bill* and *Bess*, the third as *Cal* and *Cora*, and the fourth—well, make them up for yourself, or buy the book and find out!

The author's ideas concerning suitable clothes seems to be much the same in principle as in the East, although cowboy breeches and bright silk shirts naturally make an appearance in this Western book. But he sagely points out that "a bright shirt does not make a good dancer—you still have to learn to be graceful." The book can be ordered through the Country Dance Society, or direct from the publishers.

M. G.

FROM DOUGLAS KENNEDY

"I was just beginning to write to you when the B.B.C. traced me on the telephone to ask if they might use my record of 'Edward' (which I made about two years ago) in their midnight transmission to U.S.A. So you may be hearing the record tonight. What a nostalgia this gives me for the U.S.A.!"

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