

Chiltern Folk Association

www.chilternfolk.org.uk

Newsletter

Spring 2020



We are now at the start of not just another new year, but also of a new decade, as the media suddenly seemed keen to point out at the very end of the last one. As a nation, we are also about to embark on major changes as the UK leaves the European Community and the separate parts of the British Isles become more vocal in relation to their own unique identities. Does this mean we will see an increasing awareness of, and interest in, specifically-English culture and traditions during the next few years? And if so, is Chiltern Folk Association, and the local clubs and societies affiliated to it, ready to capitalise on this interest? One of the items on the agenda of our forthcoming committee meeting, at the time of writing, is 'how can we do more to publicise our activities?' It will be interesting to see what ideas are put forward.

Since the appearance of the last newsletter in October, I have been to Chinnor to meet the 2nd Wednesday Musicians and joined dancers from across the south-east at Felicity Mankin's double celebration in December. (see report on p.2), which also provided an opportunity to introduce myself to members of the Oakenleaves dance club, who were the hosts for the evening. Although I was at home for Christmas this year, I was not sufficiently organised to search out any Mummers' Plays or Morris dancing, but I am told that the Whitchurch side had a very successful session at the Red Lion in Little Missenden on Boxing Day, after being invited to dance inside due to the inclement weather. Then it was encouraging to see a good number of people at the New Year Dance a few weeks ago.

Looking forward, the Family Dance on February 23rd is being publicised as a Barn Dance in the hope of attracting people who might be less certain about the terms 'social' or 'folk' dancing. Plans are now well-advanced for our inaugural Chiltern Folk Association Music Day on April 25th with a number of people having already booked for the workshop. Further information, and a booking form can be found on the events section of the website, <http://www.chilternfolk.org.uk/news/stgeorgesdayevent> Please make sure you have both these dates in your diaries. Come along, and bring your friends! I look forward to seeing you.

Hazel

Back on the Road - A double celebration

An unusual dance took place on Thursday the 5th December 2019, when the regular weekly meeting of Ruislip Oakenleaves at Ruislip Methodist Church was the venue for a double celebration for Felicity Mankin. After five months' wait, she had finally received her renewed driving licence despite having applied to the DVLA a good two months in advance. The dance also celebrated belatedly her 70th Birthday. Over 50 people attended from all directions and it is of interest to know that happily there are still many dance clubs. We had dancers from Amersham , Chesham, Sunday Oakenleaves in Ruislip, Hertfordshire Early Dance from St Albans, Chingford, Chipping Barnet, Ealing, Marlow, Quadrille club at Cecil Sharp House, Camden Folk Dance Club, London Pride, Romford and Brentford, Mrs Bennet's Ballroom from Clapham and Surbiton, and Thursday Oakenleaves whose club night it was. The chair of Chiltern Folk Association was among the attendees. The dance music was provided by an eight piece band led by Neville Gardner and recordings were made of most of the evening.



The dances from Tudor times to the present day were Felicity's favourites, as listed below.

The Earl of Essex Measure - 1570 from the Inns of Court manuscript

Upon a Summer's Day - 1651 first dance in the 1st edition of The English Dancing Master by Playford

Jacky Tarr -1817 Wilson

The Fandango - 1774 Thompson

Nottingham Swing - date? collected last century in Northamptonshire

The Duke of Kent's Waltz - 1801 Cahusac

La Brandobourgeoise - About 1770 from the court in Dresden

Branle Pinagay - 1589 Arbeau

The Bishop - 1778 Thompson

A Square Eight - date? from Cumberland

Bloomsbury Market - 1703 Playford

Les Lanciers - 1819 from Harts Lancers Quadrille

The Hole in the Wall - 1696 Playford - music by Purcell

The Lass of Richmond Hill - 2009 part of 'the 25th Anniversary Quadrille' by Chris & Ellis Rogers

Extras

Miss Bennet's Jigg - 1791 Campbell's 8th Collection

Pavilion Waltz - 1820 Thomas Wilson - Companion to the Ballroom

Miss Pultney's Fancy - 1788 John Gow

North Downs Waltz - undated in Vaughan Williams Library

The dances were led by a number of callers including Phyllis Chapman, Libby Curzon, Maggie Fletcher, Judith Inman, Felicity Mankin, Alan Archer, Chris Miles and Mark Craske. *Report compiled by Neville Gardner*

'Georgian Dancers of Amazing Grace'



Did you know that the Cowper and Newton Museum in Olney, Bucks has its own country dance display team? I didn't until I met Roy and Jo Walker, the museum's dance tutors at the CFA Playford Ball last year. I asked them to share what they do with readers of this newsletter. 'We perform dances from the latter half of the 18th century, the time when William Cowper and John Newton (of "Amazing Grace" fame) lived in Olney. The

nineteen strong group of museum volunteers, ranging in age from 18 to 80+, have danced at museum events, the Olney Cherry Fair, Milton Keynes Festival of History, National Trust properties Claydon House and Stowe Gardens and on one very special occasion in front of His Royal Highness, Prince William. We have even taught Charles Hanson and Keren Woodward, of Bananarama, to dance "the Spaniard" for an episode of Celebrity Antiques Road Trip.' The museum re-opens for its 2020 season on February 18th. Further information, together with a listing of special events can be found at <https://cowperandnewtonmuseum.org.uk/>

There will be Birthday Cake!



Maggie Fletcher, a much-loved member of Marlow FDC, and a familiar face/performer at CFA events, recently celebrated her 90th birthday. Maggie has been a leading exponent of playing piano for country dance for over 60 years. In the 1970s, she was a member of the Blue Mountain Band, one of the top folk dance bands of the time, which took part in all the major festivals, and played throughout England. There is a video of Maggie playing and if it is Scottish style, the back is upright with hardly any

movement, whereas in American the pianist is moving everywhere. In English the movement varies according to the dance. For more than 40 years, she led the monthly Monday Musicians sessions at Cecil Sharp House. Every evening new arrangements were handed out and used by those who were there. She has also run music and callers workshops. Dancers love the encouragement to move to the music that her playing gives and which she has shared among every one she meets. So if you see music with BMB or MM at the bottom right hand corner of the page these were written out and arranged by Maggie. In 2016, the English Folk Dance and Song Society awarded her its highest honour, the Gold Badge, in recognition of her outstanding contribution to English folk music and dance.

Maggie's birthday was in January, but recognising that the weather might be inclement the celebration on the day was limited to a family get together and tea with local friends, with a much larger event planned for March, at the Liston Hall in Marlow, when hopefully the weather will be better. This will reunite musicians who have played with Maggie, or used the musical arrangements she has written out. Blue Mountain Band may have ceased playing many years ago, but the music they shared with anyone who asked for it is still being used. Ruth Rose has agreed to lead those who choose to play for a dance (or two) and Barrie Bullimore is co-ordinating the callers. On arrival, please tell these 2 people if you would like to take part in playing or calling. Ruth and Maggie played at the Wimbledon Scottish Burns night for many years. Barrie is from Ashford, one of the clubs where Maggie and her late husband, Bob, danced before moving to Marlow Bottom. If you

would just like to come and dance, please email Linda Dorman, rogerdorman47@gmail.com so the organisers know how many to expect. There is a separate room, all on the level, for those old friends who wish to chat and listen to the music so we need to hear from you as well, please. Further information in the Diary Dates section, (p.8) and on the website, www.chilternfolk.org.uk

Jane Austen at Little Gaddesden

The ladies of Little Gaddesden Women's Institute agreed to celebrate their centenary by holding a Jane Austen evening and contacted Hazel Miller asking for a facilitator to guide them through some dances, which is how Ian and I spent the evening there on 17.10.2019. We arrived in our Regency attire and were received by a hall full of ladies beautifully dressed in costumes of the same period. One was even clad in a male costume but we realised later this was for the finale, a dramatic presentation of a 21st version of *Pride and Prejudice* in 10 minutes.

Jane Austen 1775-1817 loved to dance and dance scenes, private balls and public settings are described in all her novels, however only one dance is named: a circle dance *La Boulangère* which Mrs Bennet mentions in her account of the private ball at Netherfield in *Pride and Prejudice* and Jane refers to in a letter to her sister Cassandra in 1796.

After an introductory talk about the manner in which the Balls were held in Jane Austen's time and the etiquette on the dance floor, we demonstrated Knole Park originally published in 1788 in *Six New Minuets* but now danced in 2/4 rhythm as a longways duple minor set, so giving the idea of the top couple starting the figures with the 2nd couple and progressing along the set bringing in the other dancers on the floor. 10 ladies joined us in the set after they had seen the pattern.

After a description of Assembly Rooms at Spa towns we taught a 3-couple dance *Chelmsford Assembly* and had 2 sets dancing. We concluded with the ever-popular *Duke of Kent's Waltz* when the flirtatious nature of the dances was discussed: 'Jane was so admired.....and Mr Bingley thought her quite beautiful, and danced with her twice;' Jane Austen *Pride and Prejudice*.

It was a fun evening including a buffet supper with some creative cuisine, a Regency costume parade with judging and of course, being a WI event, a delicious and beautiful 100th birthday cake.

Val and Ian McFarlane



Phoenix Morris Winter

Phoenix Morris have had a busy Winter. Dancing before Christmas for the Colne Valley Special Sailors and presenting a further cheque to them bringing the total for 2019 to £600.

The event was attended by many members of CVSS and the Chairman of the District Council, Paula Hiscox, also attended the event. CVSS is her charity of the year.

When Phoenix dance out they either ask for a set fee for dancing or collect during their performance. This money is collected and donated to local Charities during the Year.

Colne Valley Special Sailors take disabled children and adults sailing on Rickmansworth Aquadrome and Phoenix have supported them for many years with regular contributions to the funds. A first for Phoenix, we performed a dance with some of these taking part in wheelchairs.



Since Christmas we have danced at two Wassail events, one on Croxley Green, run by Croxley Parish Council, on Friday the 17th and one in Woking, run by OBJ Morris, on Sunday the 19th.

A Wassail is an ancient tradition normally held on the 17th of January (but often these days on the closest Saturday or Sunday) where the ceremony of selecting a King and Queen of the event followed by singing Wassail songs round an apple tree which has toast dipped in cider placed in its boughs and



Woking Wassail

a wren is buried in its roots which encourage the tree to produce a plentiful supply of apples in the coming year. It is a "goodbye to winter, hello to spring" event which we think has been carried out since the middle ages.

Phoenix now look forward to their annual dinner at the end of January and our all day practice before the "dancing season" starts at the end of April.

If you want to play for or dance with Phoenix Morris, based in Rickmansworth, do contact the Squire, Michael Stimpson, on 01923 770425 any afternoon or early evening.

**Whitchurch Morris Tuesday evening
Dance Outs: all start at 8.00pm.**

- 5 May The Five Elms, Weedon
- 12 May The Rose and Crown, Wingrave
- 19 May The George and Dragon, Quainton
- 2 June The Cross Keys, Totterhoe
- 9 June The Red Lion, Little Missenden
- 16 June Grove Lock, Leighton Buzzard
- 23 June The Bell, Chearsley
- 30 June The Hampden Arms, Great Hampden

8th May Bank Holiday

- 6.30 Top of Coombe Hill
- 8.45 Hampden Arms, Great Hampden
- 10.00 World End Nursery
- 11.30 Horse and Jockey, Aylesbury
- 13.30 Half Moon, Wilstone
- 14.15 Pitstone Green Farm Museum



- 27 Feb The Gerry Colvin Band
- 26 Mar Sally Ironmonger plus Alden, Patterson and Dashwood
- 30 Apr Reg Meuross
- 28 May Iota and Kyle Carey
- 25 Jun State of the Union

THE KUALA LUMPUR MORRIS MEN

In April 1976 I was delegated to manage an exhibition promoting British Industry in the city of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Although it was hard work, by day, working in the 30 degree, high-humidity climate, there were lighter moments.

Many of the exhibitors were represented locally by ex-pat British businessmen who, themselves formed a small local community. One day, I was invited, with my colleagues to join this group for lunch at the famous Cricket Club Pavilion in the centre of K-L, and it was while we were enjoying pre-lunch drinks that the talk turned to local life and pastimes, when my host happened to mention the up-coming St. George's Day (23rd April), which I believe is (or was) celebrated more in the ex-pat communities around the world that it is here at home. My host was explaining how he'd 'got the short straw' in volunteering to organise the entertainment at the forthcoming St George's Day Dinner, which was about ten days away, to be held in the local Merlin Hotel. It was a high-profile affair, to which various local dignitaries had been invited, including the British High Commissioner, the US Ambassador and the Sultan of Johore.

My host had scratched his brains for something 'different' in the entertainment line, and having been interested in folk dancing and, a member of the EFDSS in the UK, had decided, what could be more quintessentially English than Morris Dancing? He had canvassed the local British community and found some willing volunteers to put a side together, but they were from various business backgrounds, e.g. banking, insurance, shipping etc, and I don't believe any of them had even seen Morris Dancing at 'home', let alone tried it! Well, my ears pricked up, as I expressed a similar interest and he explained that he had formed these men into a team, and had been putting them through their paces at his home, using his old 78rpm records of English Folk Dances. He then suggested I might like to come and sit in on his rehearsals and pass an opinion on their progress. I said that if he wanted, and could find me a fiddle, I would play for them as well! He was delighted.

The following day, at the end of the working day, he sent his chauffeur-driven car to pick me up from the exhibition hall, and take me to his home on the outskirts of the city. There, sipping a cool drink, I watched the 'Kuala Lumpur Morris' men go through their paces, handkerchief dances, stick dances, and, most ambitious of all, the Tyneside Rapper Sword Dance! They worked hard in the tropical humid heat, but the effort was worth it. This

pattern followed for several days in the run-up to the Dinner, and in the meantime our host had searched the local market for straw hats, fabric for baldricks, bells etc., and had even found a violin for me! He had also tentatively engaged a young American violinist so we had a fine ensemble.



Dinner before...

Came the day of the Dinner, we entered the Reception with dinner in the appropriately decorated Reception room; drapes of twee thatched cottages, and St. George's flags. The first part was formal, so I had to wear a (borrowed) dinner jacket, but at the signal, after the dessert, we slipped into a side-room to

change into our modified Morris dress, and following the MC's introduction, we came dancing in, single file, fiddle at the front and fiddle at the back, to a roar of approval. The top table, with the dignitaries could not believe their eyes. The US Ambassador muttered something like "what the h--- are these goddam Limeys doing...?", the Sultan of Johore "My golly goodness! What is happening here...?" and British High Commissioner was dumbstruck.

However, the show must go on, and so we went through our routine, to the finale Rapper sword Dance, and not only did the 'lock' hold, it was paraded round the room in triumph, until we honoured the top table, where our hosts had thoughtfully lined up eight tankards of the local Tiger Beer. Thunderous applause!



Morris after...

The following day, I was on my way home, so, like Cinderella, I handed back my borrowed finery, and flew home with fond memories of a very different 'business' trip!

Richard Belson

Directory

COUNTRY (SOCIAL) DANCE

Amersham FDC 01494 727512

Tuesdays, 8pm.

The Barn Hall, Chiltern Ave,
HP6 5AH

Chesham FDC 01494 785191

Fridays, 8.15-10.15pm.

Guide Hut, Lowndes Park,
HP5 1HX

Chinnor FDC 01844 352468

Thursdays, 8.00pm

Church Hall (behind village centre),
Chinnor, OX39 4DH

Datchet FDC 01344 646391

Fridays, 8.00pm.

1st Weds (experienced dancers)
WI Hall, SL3 9EH

Marlow FDC 01494 531716

2nd & 4th Fridays, 8.00pm.

Liston Hall, SL7 1DD

Oakenleaves (Ruislip)

Thursday, 8.15pm, 0208 422 4096

Methodist Church, HA4 7BZ

Oaken Leaves (Sunday)

2nd Sundays, 3-6pm 0208 866 7915

Guide Hut, Manor Farm, Ruislip, HA4 7QL

Towersey 01494 481459

Mondays, 7.30-9.00pm.

Towersey Village Hall, OX9 3QG

Watford FDC 01923 233371

Mondays, 8.00-10.00pm,

Christ Church Hall, Watford,
WD24 5BD

Balfolk, Reading 07405 387345

1st (poss. 2nd) Sundays 12.20-4.30pm

Watlington House, Reading RG1 4RJ

<https://readingbalfolk.wixsite.com/readingbalfolk>

MORRIS

Aldbury Morris (men)

Thursdays, 8pm, Aldbury Memorial Hall,

The Green, Aldbury, Tring, HP23 5RR

<http://www.aldburymorris.co.uk>

New Moon (mixed)

Tuesdays, Town Hall, Ivinghoe

<http://newmorris.co.uk>

Phoenix (mixed)

Wednesday 8.30pm. Scout Hall,

Rickmansworth

phoenixmor@aol.com

Stony Redcaps (women)

Mondays 8.00pm. Greek Church Hall,

Stony Stratford.

newenq@stonyledcaps.dance

Tappalachian (Appalachian clogging)

Wednesdays 8.15pm, 07566 331147

Three Horse Shoes (Women)

Wednesday 8pm, Barn at The Three

Horse Shoes pub, Towersey

www.threehorseshoesmorris.co.uk/

Towersey Morris (Men)

Monday 8pm, Barn at The Three Horse

Shoes pub, Towersey

www.towerseymorrismen.org.uk/

Whitchurch

Tuesdays. Wilstone Village Hall

info@whitchurchmorris.org.uk

Maidenhead Folk Club

13 Feb Moonrakers

12 Mar Nick Dow

2 Apr Suntrap

16 Apr Tom Perry & Clive Brooks

7 May Steve Turner

4 Jun Discovery

Phone contact number for more info. or follow links at www.chilternfolk.org.uk

SONG AND STORY

Abbots Langley Winter Acoustic

Concerts 01923 264536

Sundays 3pm (Oct, Nov, Feb, Mar)

Abbots Langley Community Centre,
Gallow Hill Lane, WD5 0AP

Chesham Folk Club 01494 785593

Mondays, 8pm

White Hill Centre, Chesham, HP5 1AG

Herga at the Castle 01923 264536

Mondays, 8pm, The Castle, 30 West
Street, Harrow HA1 3EF

Maidenhead Folk Club 01628 624460

Thursdays, 8.30pm

New Inn, Farm Road, Mhead, SL6 5HX

Marlow Bottom Acoustic Club

Wednesdays, 8.15pm 01628 483458

See <http://marlow-acoustic.uk/> for
locations

Uxbridge Folk Club 01895 464154

Thursdays, 8pm onwards

Royal Naval Association Club

388a Long Lane, Hillingdon, UB10 9PG

Village Voices Towersey 01844 352468

Wednesday, 7.30pm, Towersey Village
Hall 3rd Wednesday Bledlow Village Hall
www.villagevoicestowersey.com

Chesham Folk Club

17 Feb Said the Maiden

16 Mar Judy Cook

MUSIC

2nd Wednesday Folk 01844 351565

2nd Wednesday each month 2.00pm,
Chinnor Methodist Church

Chequers Folk Club 01494 866439

3rd Wednesdays, 8pm

The Barn, Cherry Tree Farm, Missenden
Road, Great Kingshill, HP15 6ED

www.wicktrimmers.co.uk/chequers-folk

Oaken Leaves Music Workshop

2nd Sundays, 2-3pm, 0208 866 7915

Guide Hut, Manor Farm, Bury St, Ruislip
HA4 7QL

Twyford Folk Music Workshop

0118 934 0300

1st Wednesdays, 8pm

<http://twyfordmusic.uk/>

This newsletter is available in print
form at local libraries, and through
your club.

If you would like to receive your own
copy by e-mail, please contact Hazel
(chair@chilternfolk.org.uk)

SEND DETAILS OF YOUR EVENTS TO:

chair@chilternfolk.org.uk or
newsletter@chilternfolk.org.uk.

Chiltern Folk Association

Chair:	Hazel Miller	07799 017730	chair@chilternfolk.org.uk
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Newsletter:	Joyce Wiles	01628 529298	newsletter@chilternfolk.org.uk

DIARY DATES

PFS : Bring Plate of Food to Share

- | | | |
|--------|---|--------------|
| 23 Feb | Family Barn Dance, 2.30-5.30pm PFS
Amersham Common Village Hall, 24 White Lion Road,
Amersham, HP7 9JD
Ted Morse with Neville Gardner and Friends | 07799 017730 |
| 8 Mar | Abbots Langley Winter Acoustic Concert, 3-5.15pm
Bob Fox and Billy Mitchell | 01923 264536 |
| 14 Mar | The Curiosity Consort and Players. Curiously Caledonian
A celebration of Scottish music old and new, 3pm
St. John the Baptist Church Little Missenden HP7 0RA
No tickets, Free with retiring collection: curiosityconsort@btinternet.com | |
| 22 Mar | Maggie's 90th Birthday Dance, 2.30-6pm PFS
Liston Hall, Marlow SL7 1DD | |
| 28 Mar | Singing workshop and Concert
Workshop 10:30 a.m. - 4.30 p.m. PFS
CONCERT: 7.30 p.m
Towersey Memorial Hall, Chinnor Road, Towersey OX9 3QY.
Towersey Village Voices
Jess and Richard Arrowsmith from the Melrose Quarter. | 01844 352468 |
| 28 Mar | Barn Dance in aid of Chiltern Music Therapy, 7.30pm
Great Kingshill Village Hall
The Wick Trimmers. | 01494 862331 |
| 29 Mar | Marlow's 60th Birthday Dance, 3-6.30pm PFS
Flackwell Heath Community Centre, HP10 9LS
Ivan Aitken with Jovial Crew | 01494 445829 |
| 25 Apr | St George's Day Event PFS
Musicians workshop with Lin Hetherington 10am-4pm
Dance with Vicky Baker, 5-8.30pm
St Michael and all Angels Church Hall, 70 Sycamore Road,
Amersham-on-the-hill, HP6 5DR | 02088 667915 |
| 8 May | Whitchurch Morris out from 6.30am at Coombe Hill
See page 7. | |
| 15 May | Wycombe Folk Arts Festival, from 7pm for 8pm
St. Lawrence Church, West Wycombe, HP14 3AP.
Magpie Lane - Traditional English songs and dance tunes performed on
acoustic instruments. | 01494 758522 |
| 22 Nov | Autumn Dance: Madeleine Smith with Momentum. Details TBA | |