

THE TOWN CRIER

VILLAGE GREEN ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCERS

October 2009



VILLAGE GREEN CALENDAR 2009/2010

2009

Nov. 7 Contra Plus Evening, St. Paul's Anglican Church
Dec. 9 Last class
Dec. 12 Christmas dinner & social,
Dec. 20 Last challenge class

2010

Jan 6 First class, Harrow United
***Jan. 10** First challenge class, Glenlee Community Club
Jan 30 Contra Plus Evening
Feb. 13 Workshop & Social
***Mar.13** John Trevenen Memorial Social St. Paul's Anglican
Apr. 16-18 Dance workshop with Sharon Green and The Flying Romanos
Apr. 28 Last class
May 2 Challenge class wind up
May 5 Annual General Meeting, Harrow United

***Note: correction to dates**

VILLAGE GREEN EXECUTIVE 2009/2010

President	Marion Tetrault
Vice-President	Joan Cormie
Secretary	Sheldon McLeod
Treasurer*	Terry Armstrong
Publicist	Susan Greenhill
Social Convenor	Carolyn Mosher
Member-at-large	Arlene Cutts
Member at large	Lorraine Leo de Jong
Past President	Anne Morton
Teachers' Rep.	Mary Louise Chown
Editor	Liz Goossen

*Also Archivist

President's Musings

And as to Mr. Augustus Cooper's share in the quadrille, he got through it admirably. He was missing from his partner, now and then, certainly, and discovered on such occasions to be either dancing with laudable perseverance in another set, or sliding about in perspective, without any definite object; but, generally speaking, they managed to shove him through the figure, until he turned up in the right place.

Charles Dickens

Haven't we all been in the shoes of Mr. Augustus Cooper on occasion, sometimes more often than we would care to admit? In that respect English Country Dancing is not for the feint of heart, for where else is your slightest lapse in concentration on display for all to see?

It is the constant dynamic of the individual and the group that is both the beauty and the bane of English Country Dancing. When all parts are working perfectly, it is a thing to behold. Yet, how quickly it can start to fall apart. When this happens follow Mr. Cooper's example, keep moving and smiling and before you know it you will turn up in the right place ready to continue.

Some of our more experienced dancers have developed an amazing array of signals to respond to the look of panic " What is next?" or the glassy-eyed " My brain is overflowing, Give me a clue". These signals vary from a nod of the head, a meaningful glance, some pressure on an arm or hand, to a smile to show the way.

The very soul of English Country Dancing is one of courtliness, good manners and grace. As we discover every week, there is always the next dance to enjoy, from the music and figures to the interaction between us and our partner, the others in our set and the other sets in the hall. How lucky we are to be able to dance every week and practise turning up in the right place.

Marion Tetrault

MANY, MANY, MANY THANKS

AND KUDOS

to Joan Cormie and the Auction Committee for a fabulous afternoon on September 26th. A wonderful time was enjoyed by all; those who donated talents or items and those who bid on them.

Highlights of Oct. 7. 2009 Executive Meeting

The most recent meeting of the Village Green Executive was held on October 7, 2009. A few things arose which would benefit from feedback from the membership, so consider the following three questions and let any member of the Executive what you think.

- A decision will be made in January or shortly thereafter about whether or not or to what extent dancing demonstrations would remain a part of the Village Green program. What do you think their importance is? What are the benefits to Village Green in continuing them? What about benefits to others? How supportive are you in continuing this activity?
- This fall, Village Green advertised in the Leisure Guide. The result of this was two persons 'phoning for information and six new people showing up for the opening social. One of the six has stayed engaged and is involved in the lessons. The cost of the advertisement was \$400. Do members have other ideas for more effectively spending our advertising budget?
- A Committee is being struck to make the spring workshop happen in the way we wish now that the auction has resulted in us having the funds to go forward with this. With something this large, it is very beneficial to have a committee member drawn from the general membership. There will be some people out there likely to ask you, but if serving on such a committee for this event would interest you, please let one of the Executive or one of the teachers know about your interest.

Report on The Village Green Auction September 26, 2009

As the coordinator of the auction I want to thank **everyone** who helped with the production of the auction. There are too many names to mention and if I mention a few, for sure, I will forget someone. A heartfelt thank you to each of you who donated items and talents. Also a special thanks to each of you who bid so generously. We were very successful, having raised sufficient funds to bring the Flying Romanos to Winnipeg. Even better, we had a fun time doing it together!! What a wonderful group of generous and terrific people you are.....and even better, we get to dance to the Flying Romanos in the spring!!!!

Joan Cormie

CONTRA PLUS EVENINGS
November 7th, 2009
January 30th, 2010 and April 16th, 2010

This year Village Green with Manitoba International Folk Dance Association (MIFDA) is organizing three contra evenings. The first is being organized by us on November 7th. The Fine Companions will play for part of the evening and the dance will be jointly called by us and MIFDA. Last year MIFDA organized three such evenings which some Village Green members attended. The energy and enthusiasm in the hall was contagious and we thought it would be fun for Village Green to be more involved in these evenings. Each evening will be mainly contra with a taste of either English Country Dancing or International Dancing. For this reason we are calling these dances '**Contra Plus**'.

On November 7th the Plus will be some English Country dances for those who don't usually dance ECD and for Village Green dancers the Plus will be an evening of mostly contra in a hall filled with dancers. **On January 30th**, we will have a chance to dance some international dances as well as contras.

CABBAGES AND KINGS

Tune into a new weekly radio program about storytelling! I have a new radio program all about storytelling, along with music. It's called "Cabbages and Kings" and is aired Thursdays from 12:30 pm to 1pm on CKUW 95.9 FM <<http://www.ckuw.ca>>

On Cabbages and Kings, you'll hear stories that span the ages, from ancient myths to modern urban legends, with musical breaks from my list of favourite tunes. I'll also be including tales and interviews with my storytelling friends here in Winnipeg, across Canada, and abroad. I'd love to hear from you. Send me a message anytime, or come in and tell a story on the radio. Any story, no matter how long or short. I want to hear them. Come in and let me interview you.

Also, the show is archived for 6 weeks after air time, and can be downloaded, or listened to by going to the CKUW website @ <http://ckuw.ca/>. When you get to the website, click on program schedule, then click on Cabbages and Kings on Thursday.

I'd love to hear from you.

You can send me a message at:

radiocabbagesandkings@gmail.com

Mary Louise Chown



Christmas Social

Date: Saturday, Dec. 12

Location: St. Paul's Anglican Church, 830 North Drive

Mark your calendars for the upcoming Christmas dinner and social.

Ticket sales will be limited to 80 tickets.

Dinner will be potluck.

We would like to encourage everyone to come in costume so dust off your finery and get ready to party.

Watch for more announcements, ticket sales and sign-up sheets in November.

This image is of the world's first commercial Christmas card. It was commissioned by Henry Cole in 1843, the same year Charles Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol*.

The British Postal Museum & Archive.

Volunteers Urgently Required

We know that everyone enjoys the extras such as the refreshments at our socials and after dance teas, the newsletter, the Christmas parties and other special events. We desperately need your assistance if these are to continue.

We need volunteers immediately for the following:

1. Volunteers to assist our Social Convener, Carolyn, at the following events:
 - Nov. 7 social
 - Dec. 12 Christmas Social
 - Feb or March Workshop Social

2. Volunteers to provide dainties for the following after class tea nights:
 - Nov. 18
 - Jan. 20
 - Mar. 3
 - Mar. 31

Please, don't leave this for someone else to do. Don't assume someone else has volunteered. Do your part and offer your assistance.

Phone Marion at 222-6630 to sign up.

More about 'Cabbages and Kings'

When I read Mary's note about her new radio show, I wondered why she called it "Cabbages and Kings", Off to Google. Here's what I found 'Cabbages and Kings' is one of the lines from Lewis Carroll's "The Walrus and the Carpenter"

'The time has come,' the Wallrus said,
'To talk of many things:
Of shoes – and ships – and sealing wax—
Of cabbages – and kings---
And why the sea is boiling hot
And whether pigs have wings.'

Also, it is the title of a book of stories written by O. Henry (William Sydney Porter under the pen name, O. Henry.) In 'Cabbages and Kings', Henry created a reshaping for a cycle of stories where the texture and tone of the narrative do not depend on the plot and frequently do not serve it. In fact they impede the plot, and we are happy with this process of dallying and delay: we soon learn that it is the essence of O. Henry's style.

Listen to Mary's radio show, or call Mary and tell her a story, whimsical or otherwise.

What is a Contra?

The only real answer to the question "What is contra dance?" comes when you try it. Here are a few definitions of a 'Contra' according to the web (edited somewhat by the editor)

Definition 1: a serious attempt

A dancer and his or her partner dance a series of figures, or moves, with each other and with another couple for a short time. They then repeat the same figures with another couple, and so on. The figures are similar to those of old-time square dancing. The figures are combined in different ways for each different dance. This sounds very like English Country Dancing, but the style is more relaxed and the music has a different energy and style.

Contra dancers love to swing and make eye contact whenever possible. Swing as slowly or quickly as is comfortable for you. Don't let anyone tell you that you must make eye contact, but give it a try. It adds to the enjoyment of the dance.

Definition 2: whimsical

Contra dance is a form of dance that thrusts a different person of the opposite sex into your arms every 30 seconds or so.

Actually, this is only true sometimes. It might be more prudent, but less whimsical, to say that contra dance is one of the few dance forms where by the end of the evening you are likely to have danced with everyone.

Definition 3: analytical

Contra dancing takes place in sets. A set consists of two lines, with your partner usually across from you in the other line. The set is subdivided into minor sets, which nowadays usually consist of two couples. A contra dance with such minor sets is a *duple minor* contra dance.

A contra dance with minor sets of three couples is a *triple minor* contra dance.

The minor set dances one time through the dance. Each couple moves on to a new couple, forming new minor sets, and repeats the dance. The music is usually a lively reel or jig.

The music consists of an A part and a B part, which are related much like a chorus and a verse. Each part consists of 16 beats, or steps, and is repeated twice. So a complete dance goes A, A, B, B, and consists of 64 beats total. (Musicians will usually say 32 measures.) The A and B parts are usually specified A1, A2, B1, B2. The music is phrased in 8-beat sections, and to a lesser extent, in 4-beat sections. A typical figure takes up 4, 8 or 16 beats of music.

Definition 4: an analogy

"A contra dance is like an amusement park ride we make for ourselves." --Unknown

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9L0dz3qm5c> Let's fill St. Paul's with as many dancers as there are in this video

Contra Dance on November 7th

St. Paul's Anglican Church

Point Road and North Drive

7:30 PM \$ 10.00

The dances will be called by Liz Goossen, Jeremy Hull and Dan Stone. The Fine Companions will play for part of the evening. The program for the evening will not be published ahead of time, BUT don't worry all the dances will be taught, and called.

COME OUT AND HAVE A GOOD TIME

