



September 1990

## A Little List (And Some Interesting Numbers)

If you danced every dance in our 40-week 1989-1990 Wednesday night English Country Dance series, you would have danced 545 times. Of those times, 234 would have been different dances (the other 311 being repeats of one or another of the different 234).

Of the different 234 dances, 90 appeared on the program only once during the season, which probably reflects both the amount of new material introduced as well as the large size of our repertoire.

Of the statistical top ten repeats, two dances appeared on the program eight times, and eight dances appeared seven times. Go ahead: guess.

The envelope, please:

Eight times each: *Beggar Boy* and *Smithy Hill*.

Seven times each: *Fandango*, *From Aberdeen*, *Hudson Barn*, *Miss De Jersey's Memorial*, *Old Mill*, *Round About Our Coal Fire*, *Siege of Limerick*, *Sun Assembly*.

Several of these dances were published only three years ago, but others are centuries old. How many of last season's top ten do you know? How many of last season's top ten do you know well enough to guide a new dancer through with at least a modicum of grace?

If the answer to either of these questions is "fewer than ten," don't despair, for here are two pieces of good news: (1) you're in good (numerous and friendly) company and (2) you'll undoubtedly get to do these and many other *great* dances during the 1990-1991 English Country Dance season on Wednesday nights.

See you in September.

Chris Walker

## Archival Activities

In this 75th anniversary year of CDS, Boston Centre, a number of quiet research projects have uncovered valuable information about the formative years of the Society and some of the activity that led to its inception. Rhett Krause has been investigating the history of morris dancing in America up to 1912, while James Polk, Jim Brickwedde, and Ed Wilfert have been following the 1913-1914 trail of Claud Wright in New England. Doubtless others are also researching the period--we'd like to hear from them.

Research on the English revivers of morris, sword, and country dancing on these shores early in the century reveals the local first-movers, some of whom have practically been lost to the Society. Mrs. Storrow's friend and colleague in the dance movement, Emma Wright Gibbs (first president of the Boston Branch of the English Folk Dance Society (EFDS), that is to say, the Boston Centre) was active in consolidating the teachings of Claud Wright and Cecil Sharp; and George Pierce Baker, the professor of Dramatics at Harvard (and, later, Yale) was the one who brought Claud Wright to New England and founded, together with Mrs. Storrow, the American (or, New York) branch of the EFDS.

Claud Wright was one of Cecil Sharp's morris dancers, a beautiful dancer and an inspiring teacher (to judge from contemporary photographs and accounts) who taught in 1913 at the summer homes of Professor Baker (by Mt. Chocorua, N.H.) and Mrs. Storrow (in Lincoln, Mass.) and in 1914 both there and at the MacDowell Memorial Festival in Peterborough, N.H. and at the Sidney Lanier Camp in Eliot, Maine. The Peterborough production, according to the local newspapers, involved a suite of 14 English dances accompanying a "Puritan Play" by one of Professor Baker's students--very much the model for Cecil Sharp's visit within the year. (Mr. Sharp's first American EFDS Summer School was held just a mile down-river from Lanier Camp in 1915.)

At the Lanier Camp, Mr. Wright left a dance tradition especially suitable for teenage boys, who continued with their morris and sword dancing there for the next 25 years under the guidance of Emma Gibbs, Kenneth Wheeler, Louise Chapin, and Evelyn Wells.

Boston Centre already has a new account of the dancing at Lanier Camp, together with background material from the 1915 EFDS program. New accounts of the 1914 events in Peterborough will soon be added. If you have further information, please contact us through the CDS, Boston Centre office.

Ed Wilfert