



CDS-Boston

Calendar · Spring 1980

April 5 - CDS Workshop in English Dance - For Everyone!
Focusing on "style and movement" in rants, and polkas, waltzes and other triple-time dances. Some dances taught will be done without teaching during the evening dance. Teachers: Helene and Arthur Cornelius. 2:30-4:30 p.m. \$3.00 7 Temple St.

April 5 - CDS English Dance Party - For Everyone!
8 p.m. \$3.00 7 Temple St.

April 9 - CDS Ritual Dance Series
Snowdate, or if not needed, "Jigtime." 8 p.m. 7 Temple St.

April 11-13 - English Clog Dancing Weekend, Brattleboro, Vt.
School for Traditional Dance and Song, P.O. Box 51, Marlboro, Vt. 05344, 802-254-2651.

April 13 - NEFFA Contra
Music by White Cockade. 7:15 p.m. First Church.

April 16-May 21 - CDS Morris Series
Litchfield tradition, taught by Shag Graetz. Intermediate level, previous experience necessary. By the series only. 8 p.m. \$15, CDS - Boston & members, \$18 for others.

April 19 - Spring Festival, New York City
Contact national CDS, 508 Eighth Ave., NYC 10018 212-594-8833.

April 25-27 - NEFFA Festival
Dance extravaganza including continuous square, contra and folk dancing plus demonstrations of ethnic dance. Also folk music, international foods, crafts, exhibits. Four sessions: Fri. 6-11 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Sat. 5-11:30 p.m., Sun. 12-5 p.m. Natick High School. For info, contact NEFFA at 354-2455.

May 3 - CDS Annual Members Dance
English and New England dancing for CDS - Boston members only. Please bring a dessert to share. There will be a brief business meeting during the intermission. 8 p.m. Brimmer and May School.

May 4 - NEFFA Contra
Music by Swallowtail. 7:15 p.m. Scout House.

May 16-18 - Hudson Guild Dance Weekend, Netcong, N.J.
Full program of English and American dance classes, with evening dance parties. Contact national CDS, 505 Eighth Ave., NYC 10018

June 1 - NEFFA Contra
Music by Applejack. 7:15 p.m. Scout House.

June 7 - NEFFA Workshop
Workshop in Demanding New England Style Dances. 2 p.m. Scout House.

June 7 - NEFFA Contra
A challenging contra featuring "demanding dances." Music
by Timber Salvage. 8 p.m. Scout House.

June 11 - CDS English Series
Last dance of regular 1979-80 season. Party format. 8:15 p.m.
7 Temple St.

June 15-21 - Dance Week, Brasstown, N.C.
For information, contact Joe Wheeler, Campbell Folk School,
Brasstown, N.C. 28903, 704-837-2775.

June 17 - CDS New England Series
Last dance of regular 1979-80 season. 8:15 p.m. Brimmer and
May School.

June 25 - NEFFA/CDS Summer Series
First dance of series running on Wednesdays through the summer.
First Church.

June 28 - CDS Country Dance Party
A dance for accomplished English dancers, with limited teaching.
Knowledge of the standard English figures will be presumed. Led
by "new voices" - up and coming callers. Please bring a dessert
to share. 8-11:30 p.m. Scout House.

June 30-July 6 - New Camp, Frostburg, Va.
A program of English and American dance emphasizing "perfecting
dancing style rather than teaching figures." Directed by
Barbara H. Harding. For information, write New Camp, P.O. Box
236, Herndon, Va. 22070.

July 3-7 - CDS - Boston Pinewoods Weekend
Details available in mid-April.

July 19-26 - Early Music Week at Pinewoods
Program includes separate consorts of recorders, viols, voices
and medieval strings, as well as groups for mixed consorts, vocal
ensembles, pipe and tabors, dance band, camp chorus, and country
dancing. Contact national CDS.

July 26-Aug. 2 English and American Dance Week at Pinewoods
Program planned by Helene Cornelius. Staff includes Roy Dommett
of England, Tony Barrand, Helene and Arthur Cornelius, Jim
Morrison, Tony Parkes, and Tony Saletan. Contact national CDS.

Aug. 2-9 - English Dance Week at Pinewoods
Program planned by Tony Barrand. Focus on the close relation-
ship between ritual and social country dance and with the music
and songs associated with them. Staff includes Tony Barrand, Fred
Breunig, Helene Cornelius, Roy Dommett, Jim Morrison, and
Genny Shimer. Contact national CDS.

Characteristics of Good English Dancing*

The basic level is that of being able to get through the figures without detailed walk-throughs each time. Although some dances have unusual or complicated figures with which everyone needs help, there are a number of basic figures which every good dancer should be able to do just on the call. These include: arming, siding, set and turn single, casts, hands around (circle), heys, (hey along the line, mirror heys, morris hey, crossover hey, circular hey) right and left hands across, setting, balancing back, slow set and honor.

It seems to be tempting for many new dancers to believe that mastering a number of basic figures, and knowing a few basic dances makes them good dancers. They might even become bored because they "know everything." However, they have hardly begun. It is similar to learning a language, where fluency requires, but does not consist of, knowledge of vocabulary and rules of grammar.

The next level of quality is the ability to dance to the phrase of the music, This means being able and willing to listen to the music, to have a sense for how much time a motion of a certain sort should take, and be able to match them up. It also means caring about timing, so that one is almost always there at just the right moment to begin a new figure.



* Adapted from "Becoming Better: A Guide to Applicants to the Experienced Country Dance Class by Teaching Staff: New York Dance. Activities Committee of CDSS

A third aspect of competence as a dancer is mastery of the range of steps we use in dancing. This starts with the walking or running step, which is the foundation of most English dances. It is essential to be aware of the difference between a plod and a running step, in how your body feels and how you look to others. In addition to the running step, one should know the difference between, and be competent at doing: the rant, both stationary and moving; the waltz, both in line and with a partner; the pas de bas; the polka; the skip-change step; and a slipping step or chasse.

Perhaps an earlier (and more important) skill level than stepping, however, is dancing with one's partner. This means the elementary things like making eyecontact, smiling and relating to one's partner and others in the set in a social way as if you enjoyed the interaction with them, and "giving weight" while swinging and turning. Knowing how much weight to "give," and being able to adjust it to different partners and situations, is useful. The basic attitude of caring about and responding to the needs of the people you are dancing with.

Related to dancing with your partner is dancing with your whole set. This means watching the lines as they move forward and back, moving in such a way on a hey (morris hey in particular) that the others can cut in at the right time, and generally being aware of the impression being given by the whole group.

A relatively advanced skill, in our group anyway, is learning to differentiate between styles used in dances in England vs. America, and style within each genre. This includes both obvious differences, like using an assisted cast only in New England contra dances, and more subtle things. The basic style of movement is different in English and American historical dances from that in contra dances or southern squares. We no longer use many of the intricate steps that were fashionable at other periods, but the style appropriate for these dances is light, graceful and flowing, with rather springy steps, and

very little noise. (Regional American dances are also smoothly executed but with less spring; the foot is flatter on the floor, and a skuff-skuff of the feet is quite acceptable. In general individual variations are not frowned upon as they would be in English dances from Playford or other historical sources.) English traditional dances, with polka or rant steps, are less formal and do permit individual variations in style.

The final area of concern for a good dancer is the quality of movement.

All good dancing involves more than the average pedestrian movements we use in our daily lives. The body should be picked up, posture tall and straight with the rib cage lifted up ("lifting the egg out of the eggcup"). Steps are relatively small, with spring in the ankles and weight on the balls of the feet. Body movement and shifting your center of gravity are used to get you where you want to go in time (in addition to using an occasional catch step), rather than stretching out for huge steps with your feet. Movement is fluid, not stiff or jerky.



"They" are really YOU

CDS-Boston always needs folks willing to volunteer their time to make dancing possible. Help is needed for mailings, tending the door, staffing the food booth at NEFFA festival, and planning programs. The Nominating Committee is always looking for members willing to serve on the Board of Directors, to manage the Society's

affairs and set policy. The President is constantly seeking people to plan and run regular and special events. It is not some elite "they" who are CDS, it is YOU. If you're ready to help out, please contact any official listed on the membership directory cover.

Honey C. Hastings, President



The Country Dance Society

57 Roseland Street, Somerville, Massachusetts 02143

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