

E.F.D.S. NEWS

The Magazine of the English Folk Dance Society.



WILLIAM WELLS
OF BAMPTON-IN-THE-BUSH

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Although a satisfactory beginning has been made, much has to be done before the point is reached of, "Making London Dance." The Sub-Committee therefore wish to encourage members and others to organise dancing in their own localities. It has been found that the best way of attracting new dancers is by means of Country Dance Parties and Subscription Classes which should lead to the formation of Folk Dance Clubs. Anyone wishing for help in the organisation of such Parties or Classes, or for further information with regard to districts in which the dancing has already been started, should write to the London Organiser, E.F.D.S., 107, Great Russell Street, W.C. 1. The London Organiser would be very grateful for any information as to Clubs, Classes, Parties or other Folk Dance activities in the London area, in order that new dancers may be put into touch with them at the earliest opportunity.

DANCES OF FRENCH CATALONIA.

MISS VIOLET ALFORD'S lecture to members of the Society on the "Dances of French Catalonia and the Chasse à l'Ours," was given on November 8th at the Royal College of Music.

This interesting lecture was illustrated by dances, songs and tunes from French Catalonia. The illustrations were given by Miss Alford and eight or ten other members of the Society who became anxiously Catalonian for the occasion, and danced, piped, and even sang in Catalan with a success which spoke well for their versatility.

WILLIAM WELLS.

WILLIAM WELLS of Bampton-in-the-Bush needs no introduction. His photograph, reproduced on the cover of this number of the *E.F.D.S. News*, was taken at Bampton last Whit-Monday and shows him in familiar guise, fiddling for the men whom he himself has taught to dance. It is his custom to sing quietly to his own fiddling, one foot in the meantime playing tabor to the violin, and the result is an invitation to dance which many beside the Bampton Morris men would like to accept.

It was from William Wells that Cecil Sharp noted the Bampton tunes and dances in the summer of 1909. This was largely accomplished in a house standing in the market square of Stow-on-the-Wold, which became the meeting-place for the occasion, but the historic event passed almost unnoticed at the time except by the

inmates of the house, upon whom it made a lasting impression. Unsuspecting bystanders, whatever their age, were apt to become unexpected collaborators on these occasions, and by the sweat of their bewildered brows would quickly learn to appreciate the Morris tradition.

At Oxford this year, nearly twenty years after the collecting of the Bampton dances, William Wells was presented with the gold badge of the Society, a decoration seldom given, and never with better reason.

THE CECIL SHARP LIBRARY FUND.

DURING the lull which occurs while tenders for the Cecil Sharp Memorial Building are being prepared, it seems a suitable moment for one's thoughts to stray towards detail and decoration. It is to the Library, as to the heart of the building, that the first fancy is given, and here there is scope for enterprise and energy, and for those who still have money to jingle.

It was for the Cecil Sharp Library Fund that Miss Winifred Holloway (Mrs. Shuldham Shaw), assisted by Miss Isabel Bedlington, gave a Song and Harpsichord Recital at the Grotrian Hall on December 7th last.

The greater part of the programme was given to English music, and many of the songs and tunes collected by Cecil Sharp were sung and played on harpsichord and pianoforte. The result was a delightful evening, and to the pecuniary addition to the fund, which was £71, must be added the very great enjoyment gained by the audience.

THE GERMAN SINGERS.

FOR the second time the German Singers have come and gone, and those who were fortunate enough to hear them must now find consolation in the promises of the singers to return as soon as the occasion offers.

In the course of a month's tour this party of thirty-eight singers and instrumentalists visited nearly a score of English towns, giving in all about fifty performances—not to mention the singing that happened by the way—and wherever they went it seems they could not fail to please. Perhaps the pleasure that they themselves gained from singing, and the fact that their "concerts" were not—as one of their leaders has explained—what is generally understood by the word, accounted partly for their success.

The results of the Competition were as follows :—

1st Prize. Miss M. Dickinson, 16, Orsett Terrace, London, W. 2.

2nd Prize. Miss R. Tompkins, Birch's Close, Market Harborough, Leicestershire.

The two winning designs are shown on the preceding page.

The cleverness of Miss Dickinson's design lay in her introduction of a contrasted colour-lining to the sleeves, collar, vest and inside of skirt.

Miss Tompkins's design was approved for its neat solution of the problem of hanging gracefully a full skirt on a close-fitting bodice.

Two entries were highly commended, namely :—

(1) A dress by Miss K. M. Church Bliss. It is hoped to use this design in a modified form for a Headquarters' demonstration dress. The bodice is close fitting and is continued into a flared skirt, which is ingeniously decorated, with many rows of ribbons in various widths and colours. The cuff is circular, standing straight out from the sleeve, and is decorated with the same variegated ribbons.

(2) A design by Miss Nevinson was also highly commended. This design is conspicuous for its smocking. There is a depth of about three inches of smocking down from the waist line, and two strips come down from the points of the shoulders in front. In between these two strips the E.F.D.S. badge is cleverly worked.

Other entries which were considered worthy of mention were as follows :—

In *Miss Goddard's* design coloured slashings let in on the underpart of a fluted skirt gave it a very gay effect.

Miss H. Woodcock's design included a white silk blouse with coloured embroidery on the sleeves. The tunic was made of rather thick poplin, with lacing down the front of the bodice, and the skirt was flared.

Miss J. L. Deas entered a dress made of a beautiful white Liberty crepe, with a full skirt and a coloured coatee.

Miss Barnett's dress was well cut, with the waist line on the hips and a full gathered skirt. The material with its black ground and bright coloured patterns, had an original and very strong colour effect.

Miss Lett had introduced scallops on the bottom of a skirt edged with a bright colour, an arrangement which has a good effect in dancing.

Miss Wrigley's design had smocking on the waist line in two triangular pieces which pointed upwards into the bodice, front and back.

SUMMARY.

The judges generally agreed that the most satisfactory dress for dancers is that which has a natural waist-line and a full skirt, arranged to avoid fulness on the hips. The cut of the dress is important as the figure is shown off in every movement. The tendency has been to hide the figure in long-waisted dresses, and this is considered to be a mistake.

With regard to colour designs, the only sure guides are the traditional dance costumes in the Society's possession. For example, the Forest of Dean shirt, various baldricks, hobby-horses, fool's dresses, etc. It will be seen that the colours here used are fundamental colours, accentuated by black and white. As colours are difficult to reproduce, a selection will be sent to Branch secretaries.

With regard to decorations, ribbons, and rosettes—because of their use in traditional costumes—are obviously indicated, but these forms of decoration have by no means been exploited to the full. No one has yet adopted that of the Minehead hobby-horse, which consists of rings within rings of colour. Or again, the Upton-on-Severn Morris shirt which has ribbons six inches in length doubled over and stitched, leaving the two ends free, and of course there are many other devices of this sort.

One rather obvious piece of advice to those choosing a demonstration dress is to study the effect of the whole from a distance before considering details only appreciated after a close examination.

It is hoped that this Competition will stimulate fresh ideas, and any further suggestions on this subject will be welcomed by the Editor.

THE GOLD BADGE OF THE SOCIETY.

THE Gold Badge of the Society was presented to Mrs. J. J. Storrow of Boston, Mass., U.S.A., on the occasion of her visit to the Summer Vacation School at Norwich.

The presentation was made by the President of the Society, The Lady Ampthill, C.I., G.B.E., who, in a short speech, said that the Gold Badge was given as the highest honour of the Society for work done in the cause of folk music and dance.

Mrs. Storrow was Mr. Cecil Sharp's personal friend, and ever since his death has been the friend of the Society. She has by her munificent gifts to the Cecil Sharp Fund helped to make the idea of the Cecil Sharp Memorial an accomplished fact and the new building to be known as "Cecil Sharp House" would not now have been in existence but for her great generosity.

Six Gold Badges have now been presented, namely :—to the late President, The Lady Mary Trefusis, to the late Mrs. Dudley Hervey, to Mr. William Kimber, Traditional Morris Dancer, to Mr. William Wells, Traditional Morris Dancer, to Miss Maud Karpeles and Mrs. J. J. Storrow.