

THE THIRD AGE TRUST



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Folk Dance

Roy Phillips

HOW TO START A FOLK DANCE GROUP

The following would get you started:-

1. **BODIES.** To start the whole thing off.

- Help from the main committee
- Notice in the U3A Magazine
- Join the local folk dance club
- Get their members to join the U3A
- Personal friends

2. **HALL.** Look for a suitable hall

- Condition of floor
- Location, in town, near bus route, car park
- Price of hall, condition of facilities

3. **MUSIC**

- a Obtain a record player with a bit of ----UMPH everybody is giving them away. An amplifier would be useful. Go to a car boot sale, charity shop, look at newspaper ads etc.
Records - the ones with holes in the middle - these can be obtained for 10 pence upwards, or can be borrowed from friends. Suitable English, Scottish and Irish folk music can be used, such as Jimmy Shand. Some Old Time dance records are also suitable.
- b Tape Machine, Don't forget to get some ----UMPH. One with a number counter is most useful. Now transfer all your material onto tape. Number the tapes and the material on them. You don't want to spend an hour trying to find a recording. Obtain short play tapes rather than long play ones.
- c Mini-CD. This is essential now that your group is well and truly established. Transfer all your material once again. The advantage is that you can find any particular slot immediately, any particular tune, dance or band within seconds.
- d Compact Discs. You could not do better than obtain double CD "Welcome to the Dance" EFDSS CD 05. Giving 41 good tracks, all well played, good length and timing - reels, jigs, hornpipes and waltzes, together with notation of the dance figures.
- e Live Music. Organise a few musicians they will love to help.

4. **ORGANISING YOUR MEETINGS**

Start off by booking your hall for a six week period. Work out your expenses (add on 10%) divide by the number of people, and away you go. Do not collect per visit, as it causes a lot more work. Working on a term basis, ensures continuity (it makes members feel that, if they have paid for a session, then they are jolly well going to get their money's worth).

5. EXTRAS

Check whether your U3A has a PPL Licence and consider membership of The English Folk Dance and Song Society.

6. Now an important item, the M.C./Leader of whom a lot has been written - see separate information sheet

7. Appoint the Convenor/Treasurer/Secretary who looks after everything else, the most important of which is to organise the tea and biscuits rota and then to collect enough money.

8. If your M.C. hasn't got a loud enough voice, then get a whistle (it works wonders). Later on when finances allow (i.e. that 10% has grown), invest in a microphone and amplifier.

9. Once a term you all play at being the M.C. – calling one or two dances you have learnt by heart, after which you don't complain so much about your regular M.C. By this time you know the difference between a waltz and jig or reel.

10. DANCE MATERIAL

The English Folk Dance and Song Soc (EFDSS), Cecil Sharpe House, 2 Regents Park Road, London NW1 7AY, has a vast amount of written dance material. Start with their Community Dance Manual, which used to be divided into seven parts, and contains the music, which goes with the dances.

11. Finally learn something of the history of "FOLK" Smile and have a good time. I am here to help anyway I can. Give me a ring and keep dancing, or come and have a day out in the lovely City of Bath.

Roy Phillips
18 Beckford Gardens
Bathwick
Bath
BA2 6QU

Telephone: *01225 4206*