

# Traditional Social Dance Association of Victoria



TSDAV's Bulletin Dec. 2016

Greetings to all TSDAV members & friends.

Once again, time has flown past, and we are already at the end of the dancing year !!!  
With Christmas etc. to distract us from the important things in life – *of course I mean dancing !*

**So here are a few updates, & attached flyers, for you all.**

Firstly, for those of you disappointed that we are NOT HAVING our Christmas Hoedown this year, it was decided to time-shift it to early next year, to relieve the congestion of all the 'break-up' functions!

Instead, we are having a “**Sadie Hawkins Day**” Hoedown, on **25<sup>th</sup> Feb.**

Based on the comic strip character from Al Capp's biting satirical strip, “Li'l Abner”, (think Hillbilly fun, & check out the links included below) it ties in nicely with our 29<sup>th</sup> Feb./Leap Year traditions, so it will be a 'Lady's Choice' event. Maggie & her Chestnut Street Orchestra will be playing for it.

Secondly, a big ‘**Thank You**’ to all who came to Portarlington, & helped make it such an enjoyable, and successful weekend, – *see report following.*

However, sadly it also marks the **retirement of Marion Stabb** from our Committee, after 25 years (& 21 years looking after the Portarlington weekend!) - an outstanding period of achievement and dedicated service, for which we are all HUGHLY indebted.

Thirdly, entries are now open in our ‘**New Dance**’ competition for 2017, which will again be judged at the National Folk Festival, next Easter. Entries to be sent to George Ansell, close early March.

And most significantly for our organisation, our **AGM** will be held prior to the Hoedown on **25<sup>th</sup> Feb.** We plan to have a byo picnic tea, after the AGM at 6:30, and to make the Hoedown a free-to-members event.



Sadie Hawkins Day is an American folk event and pseudo-holiday originated by Al Capp's classic hillbilly comic strip Li'l Abner (1934–1978). This inspired real-world Sadie Hawkins events, the premise of which is that females ask males to, or for, a dance. Similar dances, sometimes called Spinsters' Balls, have spread to Australia. In the U.S., February 29 is often referred to as "Sadie Hawkins Day" signifying a gender role reversal, such as a day when a woman may propose marriage to a man.

*See Wikipedia entries for Lil' Abner, Sadie Hawkins Day & Sadie Hawkins Dance.*

**Report** - a few words about this year's Spring Dance Weekend at Portarlinton.

It was grey and windy outside, but the mood in the Community Hall at Portarlinton was warm and cheerful. Lots of dancing with regular "tea-and-chat" breaks, and copious snacks made for a happy time.

As usual a mixture of dance styles were taught and enjoyed. Lots of live music added to the quality feel of the dancing, and while we couldn't have Balkan bagpipes live, authentic sounds had us circle dancing vigorously.

AS our dates coincided with Guy Fawkes Night, Jane and George taught a variety of dances themed to tell the story of those religious zealots who nearly blew the Houses of Parliament sky high! And we were very fortunate to have Delia's Friends providing the music for their dances.

"Appalachian circles and squares" leapt the Atlantic with the Pilgrim Fathers ... although maybe dancing wasn't something a good Protestant did in the early years. However, isolated in the Appalachian Mountains, dancing became a necessary pleasure in a hard life, developing into this enjoyable social tradition.

Circle and line dancing is the form of the Balkan Dance styles. Some of us (*ie me!*) found moving feet appropriately at the same time as swinging arms in time with music of a different rhythm, quite a challenge! What is seen as a simple village dance is not so simple if you've grown up in a different culture.

"New challenges from Newcastle" were clearly taught and enjoyed by all, but the 'Waltz Frontignac' had such beautiful music and movements, it was chosen to close the final dance on Sunday.

Saturday afternoon finished with a Contra callers' forum led by Jeanette Mill, during which 11 of us sat in the Bay Room sharing our experiences in calling for dances. Jeanette ably communicated many basic axioms of calling with some humorous examples.

The Saturday night dance had the Guy Fawkes theme, and there were some very inventive outfits: from lots of red firecrackers to Guy's widow in her weeds, and the prizewinning costume of the night, a patchwork of pictures of the cellars of Parliament. A prize was also given to the newest lady dancer to attend. A bonfire and stuffed Guy in his wheelbarrow, plus masks and firecracker decorations added to the theme. Needless to say, the dancing was 'fiery' at times, tempered with dances from each of the day's presenters. Maggie Duncan joined with the Barnstringers to provide the music, and Delia's friends also played a bracket.

Sunday started a little later to allow some much-needed R and R, or shopping for the lucky prize winners! Then it was modern contra dances from New England getting everyone moving. Such lively, clear calling meant you just had to join in ... *smiles all round*.

Morris dancing is regularly seen in the streets at festivals, but the sticks and bells don't encourage me to join in. It seems you need to know what you are doing to stay safe! Enter 2 experienced Morris dancers (no bells or sticks) and some of the formations and styles were shown in a fun way that was accessible to all. Our special thanks to Trevor Trotter for coming down to play authentic music - helping us to stamp and leap in time.

The weekend traditionally ends with a selection of people's choices from all the workshops and so it was, with scones and jam to send everyone home safe and happy.

PS I didn't participate in the music workshops as I have two left hands if trying to play anything, but the quality of those musicians whom we enjoyed dancing to, is such that they obviously have lots of skills to share.

C G

Nine people came along to the music workshop, which was led by Ian Tritt. Ian described in detail how the Barnstringers came to be formed about 5 years ago, and their approach to playing for contra dances. The other musicians contributed to some lively discussions, with topics including: the New England style of music, advocacy for instruments dropping out from time to time during the playing, & mixed support for including singing after the calling has settled down. The participants played about 6 pieces. Everyone seemed to find it a worthwhile experience.

J McG

*Thanks to Carol Griffiths for this report, with additional comments from George Ansell & John McGregor. Thanks also go to Sandi of 'Montanas' at Portarlinton, for generously donating the prizes.*

☞ **STOP PRESS** – at long last the film: “*The Legend of Ben Hall*” is now showing !

The TSDAV & Melb. Colonial Dancers, make the credits, for our help with the dance scene !  
That aside, it is well worth seeing as a film, faithful as it is to the historical facts, but being an ‘indi’ production, on limited release, it may not be around for long, so make the effort to see its soon!

- thanks, Geoff Molloy.

## *TSDAV DIARY DATES*

### *“Sadie Hawkins Day” Hoedown*

*Saturday February 25<sup>th</sup> 2017*

*at the Ashburton Uniting Church Hall (rear hall)*

*~ 3 Ashburn Grove, Ashburton ~ (Melways 60 D 10)*

☞☞☞

**preceded by our AGM at 6:30pm** (same day / same venue)

*~ ~ ~ provisional dates for 2017 ~ ~ ~*

### **TSDAV Dance Workshops**

#### **Dancing at the 11<sup>th</sup> Hour – ‘Dances for Dancers’**

2 - 5 pm at the Eleventh Hour Theatre Hall, cnr Gore and Leicester St, Fitzroy.

*~ ~ ~ Monthly on the first Sunday ~ ~ ~ starting 5<sup>th</sup> Feb. ~ ~ ~*

(just South-West of the Smith St. & Alexandra Pde. (Eastern Fwy) intersection.)

**All dancers are welcome**

Inquiries- Norm Ellis 9888 5332

*To be confirmed*

### **Old Time Tea Dance**

with the **Gay Charmers & friends** 4.30-9.30 pm

St David’s Uniting Church Hall 74 Melville Rd. Brunswick West

**2nd September**

### **Wattle Day Celebrations**

- in conjunction with the VFMC’s 1<sup>st</sup> Sat. Dance

A day to celebrate all things Australian

at East Ringwood Community Hall, Knaith Rd.

‘Australiana’ Family Dance with the **Blackberry Jam** Bush Band

**10 - 12th Nov**

### **Spring Dance Weekend – Portarlington**

*Initial planning is underway !*

6 dance workshops, 1 music workshop, Fri night dance, Sat night Social, Sun aft’n farewell  
with **Interstate & Melbourne teachers,**

*Traditional Social Dance Association of Victoria*

<http://tsdav.asn.au>

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