



Cambridge Dancers' Club

January 2007

Issue 4

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

Keeping you in step with CDC

A Letter from America: an insight into the Texas Twostep

By Paul Bolchover

It had to happen: after 14 years in Cambridge, and 13 years as a member of the CDC, work finally decided that it was time for me to move to Houston. No-one that knows me will be surprised that one of the first things I did was to check on the quality of the dancing out there, and it was with great difficulty that I dragged myself from the familiar comforts of Cambridge to the wilds of Texas.

Houston was fairly small until the oil boom of the 1970s. Nowadays, it is a huge urban sprawl. There are no planning restrictions, which means that new suburbs are continually being built on the edge of the city, while older housing inside the city falls into neglect or is redeveloped. Houses are built out of timber, and the hot humid weather means that buildings only last for 30-40 years. Despite the very cosmopolitan urban nature of Houston itself, you don't need to go far beyond the city limits to reach the wilds of Texas: small towns, with traditional values. The oil industry has brought both fat cats and rednecks from around the states, bringing their own hometown traditions. It came as a surprise to find that cowboy hats and boots really are considered to be part of normal clothing: it is not unusual to see several people wearing Stetson hats in the queue for passport control at the airport or out shopping. People of both sexes wear a hat to dance classes, making underarm turns much more interesting!



Perhaps it's the traditional attitude of the people, but dancing is still very popular with all ages in Houston. In particular, the "Texas Twostep" and "Polka", which are the traditional dances of Texas and most of the mid-west states. While in the UK the freedom of the late sixties led people to reject partner dancing and to start dancing by themselves on the dance floor, the same does not appear to have happened in Texas: partner dancing is very much a part of their culture, and people of my age will have picked up the Twostep and Polka at local honky-tonks while in their young teens.

Once I arrived at Houston, it was fairly easy to find somewhere to dance. A metropolitan population of five million (forty times that of Cambridge) means a correspondingly larger number of dance clubs, in nearly every style imaginable. I get my ballroom fix once a month, where the local ballroom dancing federation puts on an event that is best described as a cross between General Dancing, a CDC Ball and Ballroom Blitz. Early on, I decided not to take up ballroom lessons, but to try some new forms of dancing. I certainly fell on my feet when I joined the SSQQ dance club: a club that is so like the CDC that the similarities are amazing. SSQQ claims to be the largest dance club in North America, with around 1000 people attending classes each month. Courses are 8 hours long, consisting of 2-hours classes for 4 weeks. They teach several classes each evening, in several different styles of dancing: Twostep / Polka, West Coast Swing, Salsa, Ballroom (American style), East Coast Swing (a cross between Lindyhop, Jive, Rock'n'Roll and Ceroc), and various other miscellaneous styles. There is even a Glennis-like figure: the studio owner, Rick Archer, whose presence is felt over the entire club. One advantage SSQQ has over the CDC is that they can teach all of their classes in a single venue. This means that at the end of each evening, all of the classes merge, forming a big hour-long practice for everyone. The club has monthly dance parties corresponding to CDC balls, but there is nothing corresponding

to General Dancing. Instead, serious dancers go out to one of the many C&W clubs in town (think a Salsa club, but with cowboys). A particular favourite is called "Wild West", which combined a saloon atmosphere with women in chaps at the bar a wooden dance floor, and dancing every evening until late.

Not long after arriving, I began to learn the Texas Twostep. This dance (not to be confused with the "Nightclub twostep") is best described as doing the armwork of Ceroc (or Salsa), while dancing the footwork of the Quickstep. It progresses round the room: the basic step is in a fairly open dance hold, with the man facing line of dance starting on the left foot, going QSS (forward close forward forward) with the woman doing the same in reverse. Some people dance the second step as a forward, rather than a close. This Twostep basic is essentially the same as the quickstep, except with the man doing chasses forward, instead of sideways. The Country & Western Polka is exactly the same, but with man starting on the left foot, going QQS QQS (forward close forward, forward close forward). The Twostep can be danced to most slow to medium Country & Western music and the polka to slow Country & Western cha chas danced at double speed or to fast Polka-like tunes. Neither dance has a heel lead: the Twostep is fairly flat-footed, while the Polka seems to mainly be danced on the toes, though without the hop of the European Polka.

In general, steps taught in the Twostep can also be taught in the Polka: they simply stretch the move on the final slow to last over the three steps of the second QQS. In fact, in higher level classes, they only teach the routine in the twostep, and leave it to the dancer to work out a Polka version. The simplest steps that can be added are the turns from dancing forwards to dancing backwards: dancing forwards, the man starts swinging himself to the side on the final slow of the basic, does a half turn on the next QQS (which normally goes side close back) and goes backwards on the final Slow. To turn from backwards to forwards, the man steps (back back side) on the QQS, and spins half a turn on the next slow (very similar to a Spin Turn). The turns work identically in Polka.

Until around 1980, that was it! There were a couple of advanced steps: the "Circle Turn", which is just going forward to backwards repeatedly, and the "Reverse Circle Turn", which is the same but in the opposite direction (crossing your feet like in Viennese Waltz). In 1979, Travolta starred in the film "Urban Cowboy": a similar film to "Saturday Night Fever", but with country music and Travolta dancing the Twostep. The film was very popular (especially in Houston, where it was filmed), and suddenly all of the nightclubs stopped playing disco music, and started playing Country Music instead. The youth of the day had previously been dancing to disco music with a partner dance referred to as the Aggie Jitterbug which was nearly identical to Ceroc - lots of arm movements, no footwork ("Aggie" is probably meant as an insult, since it refers to the Texas A&M university - a great rival to the University of Texas in Houston). These dancers suddenly found themselves restricted to Twostep music, dancing a dance with very little variety. As a result they experimented, trying to fit stationary Jitterbug moves into the progressive Twostep rhythm. Some worked, some didn't. There was also a lot of influence from ballroom teachers who, on seeing a new trend, started holding classes and adapting US-style Foxtrot moves to fit. No matter how complicated the steps get, the rhythms of the dances never change. Unlike International Ballroom, where interest is added by fancy footwork and timing, in these dances, interest is added by underarm turns of your partner etc, while the timing remains constant. A lot of beginning Twostep moves involve the "double turn" for the woman (actually a 1 1/2 three-step turn for the woman to the left, under the man's arm). In this way, the modern Twostep (sometimes called the Western Swing) was born.

Dancesport Team — victory at Nottingham

CUDT has had a great start to the season with a combination of talent and hard work producing very encouraging results at Nottingham in both open events and the team matches. Cambridge couples made finals in the novice, intermediate and advanced ballroom and latin events: Paul Fannon and Vesna Kadelburg, Nejc Jus & Pauliina Markulla and Florian Wansel and Mai Trinh all made the advanced ballroom final and Paul and Vesna made the advanced latin final.

The A, B, and C teams won their team events — retaining their titles from last year— beating arch-rivals Oxford into second place, and the D team narrowly missed out on victory coming second to Oxford by a few points. The unlimited D team consisted of 16 couples, and in the semi finals was represented by 14 of these couples over the four dances showing the depth of the squad this year, and the potential for future years.

At the end of last term some couples attended the Suffolk Open Championships hosted by Tom and Pat Lait in Ipswich. Notably Kenneith Yong and Shoko Jin won the novice latin and Kunal Gupta and Olga Shevnyk made several finals in both ballroom and latin.

This term the team will continue to train hard and many couples from both the main and beginners team took the opportunity for some pre-season training at the 'Sevenoaks Dance camp' hosted by Paul and Vesna. This has kick started the season for many people, and together with an extended team practice on Thursday evenings this term, should help the team to maintain their leading position on the university circuit.

The reunion match in November was a great success with 35 couples taking part including half a dozen old

team couples returning.

This term CUDT as in previous years will be attending the Sheffield social competition, SUDC and IVDC. Results will appear on the CUDT section of the CDC website. The team would welcome any support at competitions if you'd like to attend—details of competitions can be found on www.universitydancesport.com

To help out this term our regular team coaches (Bruce Lait, Paul Walker, Benoit & Lorraine Drolet; Rory & Katherine Costain and Andrew Cuerden & Hanna Haarala) will be joined by Stephen and Jenny Hillier on Sunday 18th February. CDC also hope to host ballroom and latin workshops and well as a dance fitness workshop in the forthcoming months.

CDC Events www.cambridgedancers.org/events

Dates of dancesport workshops and a fitness workshop TBC — these will be advertised on the website.

Cuppers

From 1.30pm, variety of events from beginners to advanced as well as the inter college team match
See back page for more information.

Saturday 17th February 2007

Lee Hall, Wolfson

Rock n Roll Social

From 7.30pm—10pm

Friday 23rd February 2007

Free

Centre at St Pauls, Hills Rd

1950s dress welcome

Ballroom beginners social night

8-10pm

Suitable for those who started learning this year

Saturday 3rd March

Free

St Columbas

Tea Dance

1.30pm-4.30pm

Social dance plus refreshments.

Sunday 4th March

£5

Howard Building, Downing

Dress: smart.

Salsa Spring Ball

Lessons 7-8pm; dancing until 12am.

Featuring live band Palenke and demo by Barranco. E-mail: salsaeventtickets@cambridgedancers.org.

Sunday 11 March 2007

£10 for members, £12 for non-members.

University Arms Hotel

CDC Ball

7.30pm—1am

Coaches depart from Queens Rd at 7pm

Live music, bar open until midnight. Tickets available from 23rd February

Friday 16th March 2007

£20 incl transport, £16 excl transport

St Ivo Centre, St Ives

Dress: Black Tie

Future Ball Dates:

Summer Ball

21 June 2007

Competitions 2007

Sheffield Social

Saturday 10th February,
The Octagon, Sheffield

Southern Friendly

Saturday 17th February
Southampton University

Southern Universities Competition

Saturday 24th February
Bath University

Northern Universities Competition

Saturday 24th February
Leeds

Inter Varsity Dance Competition

Saturday 10th March,
Empress Ballroom, Blackpool

Manchester Spring Comp

Saturday 28th April
Manchester University

Varsity Match 2007

Saturday 5th May,
Burgess Hall, St Ives

For information on open circuit and student competitions and details of social events and workshops around the country and to discuss dancing in our discussion forum with other current and former students see:

www.universitydancesport.com



Inter Varsity *Dance* Association
universitydancesport.com

Xmas Ball

The CDC Christmas Ball at the start of December was a success—and sold out a week before the event. Over 200 people danced the night away in the Burgess Civic Hall, St Ivo Centre. An entertaining demonstration was given by the UK number

two Amateur Ballroom couple Marco Cavallo & Joanne Clifton, who won the tango at the British National Dance Championships in Blackpool a few weeks earlier.



www.ballroomreflex.com

Pasion de Salsa

The first ever Winter Salsa Ball was a fantastic success. The live band, Palenke, were first rate and made the night for most of the dancers. We had over 170 people in attendance and the event was sold out several days before, much to the disappointment of some people trying to buy tickets on the door. The atmosphere was brilliant in such a lovely venue and we have had some excellent feedback with many of the guests telling us it was the best salsa event they had ever been to in Cambridge.



As a result of such positive feedback we have decided to run a Spring Salsa Ball - Pasion De Primavera - on March 11th and are delighted to welcome Palenke back to The University Arms Hotel for another op-

portunity to experience them live. There will be lessons from 7-8pm and dancing until midnight, including a show by Barranco (The Cambridge University Salsa Team). Tickets are limited once again and it is very likely to sell out - so make sure you book yours early to avoid disappointment. Email SalsaEventTickets@CambridgeDancers.org with the number of member (£10) and non-member (£12) tickets you require.

Last term the team performed this years demo for the first time at the Club Salsa Christmas Party, surprising quite a few people at the new direction of the choreography this year to include more body isolation and hip-hop styling. This term we have confirmed demos at the Cambridge Union ball and Pasion De Primavera. The team will also be competing in the salsa event at Cuppers in February.



What can we do for you?

If you'd be interested in any CDC reunion events, whether a dinner back at a Cambridge college or an informal drink in London, let us know. We are keen to keep as many CDC members in touch as possible and we'd like to hear what events would interest you.

E-mail alumni@cambridgedancers.org

If you or your company are interested in advertising with CDC contact the President on: president@cambridgedancers.org

Rock 'n' Roll - from Salisbury to Slovenia

On Saturday 2nd December, three couples travelled to Slovenia to compete in European B-Class. The couples now hold world rankings of 106 (Nichola Burns & Graham Smith), 102 (Amy Oliver & Steve Romans) and 95 (Katie Walland and Barny Golder).



On 17th Nov, the Rock 'n' Roll team performed at a Spire FM charity Grease-themed night for local radio station Spire FM. The formation demonstrations and teaching were well received. The team will be competing this term at various student competitions: the Sheffield Social, SUDC and IVDC. The team will also be performing at the Jewish Society Ball on 18th February.



XS Success

The end of 2006 saw the most successful period for XS Latin so far. In November, the team defended its British National Championship in convincing style. The competition saw Fever Latin team, trained by Rachael Holland and Michael Stylianos, finish in second place and the Kent Latin team, trained by Mark Shuttlear and Gemma Bennett, take third.

At the beginning of December the team visited Bremen, in Germany, to represent England at its fifth IDSF World Latin Formation Championships. In a thrilling competition, probably the highest standard the team has ever participated in, the host team of GGC Bremen took the world title for the first time in its history. Zuvédra Klaipéda from Lithuania, the reigning champion since 2002, was



beaten into second place. XS, despite giving its best performance ever in a world championship, failed to make the semi-final, finishing a creditable 18th place against world class opposition.

Having been invited to the Donaupokal Invitation competition, the team travelled to Vienna on 15th December for its final contest of the year. 25 teams, from 10 countries, including 8

from Germany, were invited to the competition. XS Latin danced a superb performance, full of energy and clarity, and was delighted to make the semi-final, placing eleventh. The match was streamed live on the internet and can be viewed at:

http://streaming.telekom.at/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=600&Itemid=

The Viennese competition was the team's last competitive outing with its Song of South America routine. Work has started on a new routine, entitled *On Broadway*, which uses classic tracks from musical theatre such as Big Spender, Whatever Lola Wants and Aquarius. XS Latin is always looking for new members; if you would like to find out more then contact David Malla-bone on david@djmalla-bone.wanadoo.co.uk or visit their website at www.xslatin.org.uk.

2007 is XS Latin's 10th anniversary year and the team will be hosting a party for all of its old alumni in the summer. If you are a former member of XS that has lost contact with the team but would like to join them to celebrate 10 years of XS then please contact David.



CUPPERS — YOUR COLLEGE NEEDS YOU!

The inter-College competition Saturday 17th February Lee Hall Wolfson College

Dancesport Cuppers: CDC's annual dancing competition, featuring opens in several dance styles including Dancesport, Rock 'n' Roll and Salsa, and finishing the day with the inter-college Dancesport team match. Doors open at 1.30pm, first round at 2pm, Last waltz approx 9pm. See: www.cambridgedancers.org for more information.

There will be categories at various levels, including beginners-only. A full list of events will be added to the web site shortly. Cost will depend on number of events entered.

For the inter-college team match, teams consist of four couples, each dancing one of waltz, quickstep, cha cha cha and jive during the match. Ex-CDC members can return to dance for their former College. A list of College captains will be on the website shortly. For more information contact: events@cambridgedancers.org



Cambridge Dancers' Club

We have set up a mailing list for all alumni which will allow you to stay up to date with the latest news and receive details of club events via e-mail. Please register on: www.cambridgedancers.org/alumni

For details on events please e-mail: events@cambridgedancers.org

For any other queries please e-mail Rachelle on: alumni@cambridgedancers.org

GENERAL DANCING

The Cambridge Dancers' Club tradition of free social dancing on a Friday night continues.

Social Dancing Fridays 8.30-10.30pm

During term: 2nd floor University Centre off Mill Lane; Outside Term: St Columba's Halls, Downing Place

Term dates:

16th January 07—16th March 07

24th April 07—15th June 07

2nd October 07—30th November 07