

CHAIN REACTION SDC

Newsletter December 2025

Merry Christmas

It's been another busy year with lots of dancing and many of us enjoying dancing holidays in UK and abroad. We would like to thank Di for all her hard work and all of you for supporting the club. Also thank you to Alan for producing the newsletters which enable us to keep in touch with everybody.

Please keep your contributions coming and it's always good to hear from past as well as present members. Thank you for your enthusiasm and your company.

Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy new year from the CR Committee.

Christmas-Themed Wordsearch¹

For those times at Christmas when you want a diversion from the worldly view. List of words on the next page. This wordsearch and a bah-humbug version can be downloaded from the Newsletter page of our website www.chainReactionSDC.co.uk

E	C	A	E	P	P	O	N	D	E	R	E	C	A	R	G	E	S
P	H	C	C	S	D	R	E	H	P	E	H	S	H	D	S	T	L
I	R	O	I	W	O	R	S	H	I	P	L	C	F	I	F	Y	E
P	R	V	O	S	S	A	M	N	I	M	I	R	A	C	L	E	G
H	Y	E	J	S	T	N	N	E	G	B	A	R	A	J	Y	N	N
A	M	N	E	A	A	Z	O	O	S	N	P	N	C	Y	R	C	A
N	A	A	R	V	R	N	L	I	K	S	D	B	T	O	O	A	Q
Y	I	N	T	I	O	D	Z	I	T	L	I	I	U	G	L	R	N
N	U	T	H	O	F	Q	N	F	E	A	V	A	O	M	G	O	C
O	L	Y	G	U	B	C	A	L	L	I	V	S	H	K	I	L	M
I	E	R	I	R	E	I	I	K	T	F	U	L	P	T	Q	S	T
N	L	A	L	N	T	G	S	A	T	S	I	R	A	H	C	U	E
U	L	M	S	H	H	Z	N	Z	E	V	A	N	V	S	U	G	H
M	A	E	Q	T	L	D	F	J	I	D	R	L	A	N	M	Y	H
M	R	N	H	P	E	S	O	J	V	A	S	M	A	N	G	E	R
O	T	S	I	R	H	C	O	E	C	X	W	R	E	A	T	H	T
C	S	H	O	P	E	K	N	N	M	E	H	E	L	H	T	E	B
L	C	C	Q	L	M	T	I	E	M	M	A	N	U	E	L	Y	W

Word List

This list focuses on vocabulary related to the theological, historical, and traditional elements of the Nativity and the season of Advent. If your preference is for a bah-humbug version then you may find the alternative version on the CR website preferable. Check the link on Newsletter page of our website.

NATIVITY	MANGER
INN	BETHLEHEM
MESSIAH	SAVIOUR
INCARNATION	EMMANUEL
JESUS	CHRIST
MARY	JOSEPH
SHEPHERDS	ANGELS
STAR OF BETHLEHEM	FRANKINCENSE

MYRRH	GOLD
WORSHIP	EUCARIST
COMMUNION	MASS
HYMNAL	CAROLS
CANDLELIGHT	WREATH
ADVENT	EPIPHANY
REJOICE	PRAISE
ALLELUIA	PONDER
GLORY	PEACE
SALVATION	HOPE
FAITH	LIGHT
MIRACLE	COVENANT
GRACE	

Answer sheet is the final page of this newsletter.



Contra dancers

Marvellous Mescolanza

Lancaster's November contra may not have had the most dancers ever but it was an exceptional programme for an "ordinary" contra.

The planning chat went like this:

Caller (Rhodri): "Anything you want included?"

Organiser (Judi): "If the floor's up to it I'd like a challenge <2 suggestions inserted>"

The organiser thought the suggestions may be on the optimistic side and wasn't expecting both of them. The caller apparently likes a challenge! Both were included, along with thoughtful things that would aid their success.

"This is really a workshop dance" said the caller of the most difficult dance. About 1/4 of the room were competent in the call — a teacup chain. Despite having a few people who were completely new dancers it did not fall apart — it went very very well. There aren't many callers who could have pulled that off. You can find videos on our social media - links on our website at LancasterContra.org.uk

Next year "Di's Deuceys", a square written by Judi with a right and left handed relay the deucey, will be called at Halsway by Atlanta's dance magician Seth Tepfer. He will be calling in Lancaster on 4th October [2026].

Text and photo Judi Hunter

Talking To Dancers Who Are New To Square Dancing

Background

In common with other clubs, our numbers of active members declines over time for all the obvious reasons; people have accidents, illnesses, move or feel that they can no longer dance effectively. The demands on potential new recruits to square dancing have never been greater, changes in society have made it harder for people to have hobbies or activities.

Recently a friend of ours started square dancing with Lune Valley Ocean Wavers after talking to us about dancing. Both Gill and I are now supporting the new person by going to Halton on Monday evenings to help and encourage them and the other new dancers.

I asked some of the new people some straightforward questions trying to discover what had brought them to square dancing and their impressions. This is a brief report to share the findings. I also asked the latest recruits at Chain Reaction to compare and contrast their answers, the results are presented in two separate sections below.

Previous dancing experience

People had varying prior experience of dancing, sometimes very recent, such as regular other types of dance events or classes in a particular dance style, whilst others had not danced since school except for maybe an occasional barn dance type of event.

Things new dancers found easy

The basics, because they remembered them from school. They also found the explanations from the caller and other dancers helpful.

The things new dancers found difficult

The hardest thing was the amount of mental effort involved and feeling exhausted after a relatively short period of dancing. There were the specific mentions of things like knowing where ones feet should be, keeping an eye on the other dancers in the square to maintain spacing and getting the new names and terms into ones head. Sometimes the dancing was too fast and it was difficult to keep up with the pace. Swings were also difficult for new beginners.

What was unexpected

The most common thing mentioned was the friendliness of the other dancers and their willingness to help and encourage new dancers. The atmosphere was welcoming and not at all stuffy, so new people felt welcome. A willingness to invite friends was mentioned too.

Cost

The cost of square dancing was perceived as being relatively low compared to other types of dancing.

Reasons for joining the group

There were a lot of benefits of joining that were mentioned, such square dancing being a form of exercise, a way of meeting new people, a fun activity, learning a new skill, improving fitness and using one's brain.

Conclusions

When talking to our new dancers I was struck by their positive feelings towards the group and how much they felt welcome and how much they were enjoying the experience.

New dancers also mentioned that they were invited by someone, which demonstrates how important it is for all existing dancers to keep inviting their friends when there is a recruitment drive.

Talking To Dancers Who Are New To Advanced Square Dancing

Previous dancing experience

Summed up in one word — extensive; Ballroom, Sequence, Morris, Clog, Tap, Appalachian, Line Dancing, Mainstream and Plus.

Things that were easy

Some different responses here, 'nothing', thinking something is easy leads to making a mess of dancing. How easy or difficult the learning process felt depended on the other people in the square. Pace of teaching and learning has been good, not too fast with consolidation of the moves.

The difficult things

Turning out to travel on dark nights was mentioned, as was knowing left from right. Depending on who is in your square you find that some of the experienced dancers do not touch hands at intermediate points during a move to execute the moves according to the definition but rush through to the finish. Some people pull and push the new dancers too much. Catching up with moves that were taught when not present was also found difficult.

Unexpected things

Not really knowing what to expect when turning up for the first time. The other dancers are generally friendly, patient, welcoming and encouraging.

Joining the group

By invitation from existing members.

Conclusions

Chain Reaction is an Advanced Level club, as it says on the website “*you need to have completed all the Social Square Dance, Basic, Mainstream and Plus moves of Modern American Square Dance.*” This means that new people will have square dance experience, usually recent, and it’s not surprising to discover that they also have interests in other forms of dance.

As with people who are new to square dancing the initial invite to A square dance came from an existing member of Chain Reaction.

Previous or current interest in other dance forms seems a good indication that people will be open to starting square dancing.

Thanks go to the new people at Lune Valley Ocean Wavers and Chain Reaction for being willing to share their experiences. There is something here for each of us to hear and use immediately.

Alan Chard

A Kind Of Humour . . .

Why did God create Adam before Eve?

He didn't want any advice on how to do it.

“Thank you for sending me a copy of your book; I'll waste no time reading it.” — Moses Hadas

“I didn't attend the funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it.” — Mark Twain

“Some cause happiness wherever they go; others, whenever they go.” — Oscar Wilde

“I've had a perfectly wonderful evening. But I'm afraid this wasn't it.” — Groucho Marx

A cartoonist was found dead in his home.
Details are sketchy.

I used to be a banker, but then I lost interest.

Haunted French pancakes give me the crêpes.

On all your cheque stubs, write, “For Sexual Favours”

And a few for those whose first language is not English . . .

The dump was so full that it had to refuse more refuse.

We must polish the Polish furniture.

He could lead if he would get the lead out.

The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.

Since there is no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present.

A bass was painted on the head of the bass drum.

When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.
I did not object to the object.

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Newsletter contributions to Alan Chard, please use the chainreactionsdc@gmail.com email because a contribution sat in my junk folder for a week and was only discovered by accident.

Please keep your contributions to this newsletter coming, send by 30th December 2025 for the January edition.

Answer sheet

E	C	A	E	P	P	O	N	D	E	R	E	C	A	R	G	E	S
P	H	C	C	S	D	R	E	H	P	E	H	S	H	D	S	T	L
I	R	O	I	W	O	R	S	H	I	P	L	C	F	I	F	Y	E
P	R	V	O	S	S	A	M	N	I	M	I	R	A	C	L	E	G
H	Y	E	J	S	T	N	N	E	G	B	A	R	A	J	Y	N	N
A	M	N	E	A	A	Z	O	O	S	N	P	N	C	Y	R	C	A
N	A	A	R	V	R	N	L	I	K	S	D	B	T	O	O	A	Q
Y	I	N	T	I	O	D	Z	I	T	L	I	I	U	G	L	R	N
N	U	T	H	O	F	Q	N	F	E	A	V	A	O	M	G	O	C
O	L	Y	G	U	B	C	A	L	L	I	V	S	H	K	I	L	M
I	E	R	I	R	E	I	I	K	T	F	U	L	P	T	Q	S	T
N	L	A	L	N	T	G	S	A	T	S	I	R	A	H	C	U	E
U	L	M	S	H	H	Z	N	Z	E	V	A	N	V	S	U	G	H
M	A	E	Q	T	L	D	F	J	I	D	R	L	A	N	M	Y	H
M	R	N	H	P	E	S	O	J	V	A	S	M	A	N	G	E	R
O	T	S	I	R	H	O	O	E	C	X	W	R	E	A	T	H	T
C	S	H	O	P	E	K	N	N	M	E	H	E	L	H	T	E	B
L	C	C	Q	L	M	T	I	E	M	M	A	N	U	E	L	Y	W

¹ Wordsearches were generated by word search generator app; it can be downloaded from Github.

For ease of printing the wordsearches, word lists and answer sheets can be downloaded from the Chain Reaction website, go to the Newsletter page and you will find the links with the December 2025 Newsletter.