

GEORGE MEIKLE LEADS AGAIN

Let's hear it for Jan Jones of the Thistle Scottish Dance Club for organising, almost singlehandedly, such a classic and memorable day in September in the Wing Village Hall near Leighton Buzzard.

Boarding an early train, I began to wonder if I would last out the long day to play my drum right through the evening Dance – 7.30 to 10.30pm. However all was structured to ensure that every musician who wished to, would have every encouragement and rehearsal to show off their musical skills during the excellent evening Dance. The event was led by George Meikle who travelled from Scotland with his versatile Roland electronic accordion and compact PA system. We had been sent, several weeks earlier, a "Workbook" covering all the tunes to be played at the Dance. Plenty of time for the homework. The tune arrangements were meticulous. A couple of the tunes had deliberately been printed without the "chording", with the object of making the musicians consider what chords they themselves would use. During the course of the day these chords were tested and amended as necessary, for best musical effect. Some slight printing errors were ironed-out and the order in which some of the tunes in the "Sets" were played was changed after discussion, to get the best results for the dancers.

The 10 musicians attending were invited by George "to drive it" and to play a "running bass line" and to be careful to avoid a "stodgy and lethargic" style of playing. Some of the players brought up on the "English" dance scene found it hard to get into this mindset. By the evening everyone had settled into a groove of crisp "Scottish-ness" – A tribute to George's skill as a tutor.

"Leave space between the notes", was another of George's pearls of wisdom to take home and ponder. The whole day passed very quickly. Coffee, breaks, even a visit to the pub along the road for a meal prior to the Dance, made for an

excellent social scene. The musicians had come from a wide area, covering West Midlands, Yorkshire, Nottingham, Leicester, Oxford, London, as well as more locally, so there was a great deal to talk about. During the Dance there was an opportunity for the musicians to dance, too, from time to time as George had chosen to play solo on some of the programme, when he demonstrated in full his virtuosity at the vertical keyboard. A great event. George has said he is due a break, for now, as he has travelled four times from Scotland to handle this Dance. However we keep our fingers crossed that there will be a repeat of some kind next year.

Tom Cooper – London Branch.