

Lis Talbott Memorial Workshop 12th October, The Dance Centre, Llandrindod Wells. Tutors Alison Kinder, Anne Deller & Kath Waters.

For a special tribute to our friend and colleague Lis Talbott, who died last year, I've enlisted the help of Alison Kinder and two members of her new ensemble, Apollo's Revels. While Alison and Lynda Sayce play lute and viols, experienced historical dancers Anne Deller and Kath Waters dance in costume. On this occasion, Lynda can't be with us, but Alison, Anne and Kath have put together a Baroque dance day, including some Playford dances.

Instrumentalists will spend the whole day learning a range of dances, but the day will be carefully structured so that everyone gets to play and to watch the dancers, and dance themselves if they wish. And those who only want to dance get tuition for the first half of the afternoon, although you are cordially invited to listen to the music during the morning if you would like to. You'll get a fully trained band, two professional dancers to guide you round the floor, dances from the easier end of the spectrum and a demonstration of the harder ones from Kath and Anne, at half the price of the full day.

Most instruments will be welcome although obviously some lend themselves to accompanying dances better than others so bring what you think most suitable and a selection if you can, so we can change the style to suit the dance. (A=440)

The dance music we will work on in the morning will include a piece from Lully's opera 'Achille et Polixène', a theatrical dance for two shepherdesses with music by Loeillet, and a suite by the English dancing master Mr Isaac. The music for the Isaac is particularly interesting because it doesn't exist! Or at least, it only exists as a single melodic line in the dance manuscript recording the choreography. Isaac is a crucial source of material for baroque dancers, but it is impossible to find recordings of the music for any of them. Apollo's Revels are gradually embarking on a project to create musical resources for the Isaac collection, so this workshop will be an exciting first outing for one of the suites. Once again, BMEMF members are able to help with a real early music research project!

For those wishing to learn a dance or two, Kath and Anne will teach some Playfords in an 'Early Dance Ceilidh' beginning at 2pm, before the final session of the day where they will dance to the accompaniment of the BMEMF Baroque Dance Band.

'Playford Dances' has become a generic term for country dances that can be picked up quickly, but they go back to John Playford, who published a book of brief instructions for a hundred or so such dances in 1651. He called the book 'The English Dancing Master', probably a joke title because all the best dancing masters were French. The book proved a great success and a second edition was issued the following year, and a third three years later; the later editions dropped the joke and were simply titled 'The Dancing Master'. Successive editions were published until 1728, with John Playford's son Henry taking over in 1648, and then John Young in 1709. In all over 1000 dances were published!

Fran Johnstone