

# English Country Dancing



Photo by Janice Hanson

An introductory course  
offered through the MMU “After Dark” series

7 Monday classes, 6:30pm to 8:30pm  
Jan. 9, 16, 23, 30 & Feb. 6, 13, 20

Fee: \$80

Mount Mansfield Union (MMU) High School  
211 Browns Trace, Jericho, VT

Taught by Val Medve to recordings  
Attend on your own or with a friend/partner

See back for registration form

For more information:

<http://www.mmu.k12.vt.us/activities/afterdark/afterdark.html>

# MMU After Dark Registration Form (deadline: Jan. 3, 2012)

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Course choices:

Choice 1: **ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCING** \_\_\_\_\_

Choice 2: \_\_\_\_\_

## Contact Information:

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (Home or Cell): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (Work): \_\_\_\_\_

## Mailing Address:

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

Town: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks out to: **MMU After Dark**

## *Send check and registration form to:*

*Business Class, MMU*

*211 Browns Trace*

*Jericho, VT 05465*

## **HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT US?!?** (Please circle all that apply)

Email      Clarks Truck Center sign      Word of mouth

Front Porch Forums      Local newspaper

School news letter      Flyers around town      Bulk mailing

Course Instructor (Val Medve)

Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

# ABOUT ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCING

**Is this for me?** Yes, if you enjoy moving to music and dancing with a group of people — or think you might. Come with or without a partner — we will change partners frequently. Adults and kids/teens 12 and older are welcome. It's best if kids/teens are accompanied by an adult. Please leave younger children home.

**What is English Country Dance?** English Country Dancing is done with a partner (man-woman is traditional, but it's perfectly acceptable for 2 women to dance together or 2 men to dance together). Partners are formed into sets which take various shapes (lines, squares, circles) depending on the dance.

The beauty of English Country Dance comes from the flowing patterns created by the dancers as they move around on the dance floor, engaging their partners and the couples around them. As in contra dancing, English Country dancers take hands to form circles, make stars, and turn another dancer. And the basic step is simple: Walking in time to the music (that is, moving with the musical phrase).

English Country Dance (or ECD) is a form of traditional dance that dates back to Elizabethan times. In 1651, John Playford compiled the popular English Country Dances of the time in his book, "The English Dancing Master". In the early 19th century, Jane Austen wrote about English Country dancing in her journals and novels. (See [www.cdnny.org/wolfe.html](http://www.cdnny.org/wolfe.html) for a New York Times article about ECD and a Jane Austen night of dance in NYC.)

The ECD repertoire is broad and includes dances from John Playford's book, from other 18th and 19th century sources, and many recently composed dances. Each dance has its own distinctive music, which may be a traditional tune, one composed specifically for the dance, or it could be from a classical source, such as Purcell, Beethoven, or Handel.

Today, ECD groups throughout the United States and abroad get together on a regular basis to dance, and there are weekends and dance camps as well. There is a local group that meets on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays from **September 16, 2011 through May 18, 2012** at Elley-Long Music Center in Colchester, Vermont! See [www.burlingtoncountrydancers.org](http://www.burlingtoncountrydancers.org) for more information and video clips. The group also has a page on Facebook: Burlington Country Dancers.

**What should I wear?** Bring clean, grit-free, flat-soled shoes with some traction that will allow you to move easily (avoid high/narrow heels, hard/slick soles, sneakers, mules/slides, and flip flops, please). Sneakers are okay, but are not recommended because they tend to "stick" to the floor. Please dress comfortably, with perhaps a removable layer — dancing can warm you up. Women may wear slacks, although skirts or dresses are fun to dance in and are "traditional".

## **ABOUT THE TEACHER**

**Val Medve**'s interest in folk dance began in elementary school, when she was introduced to traditional Polish dance. After college, she danced recreationally in the Hartford, CT, New Haven, CT, and Amherst, MA areas, enjoying New England contra dancing, English country dancing, and international folk dancing. That led to performing with two Hartford, CT-based groups: Reel Nutmeg (English country dance) and Gwiazda (Polish dance). In 1985, she toured Eastern Europe with the Burlington, VT performing group, The Green Mountain Volunteers. After moving to Vermont in 1989, she danced with The Green Mountain Volunteers and Sleepy Hollow Morris. Val teaches international folk dance (IFD) and English country dance (ECD). She is one of the teachers for the ECD series at Elley-Long Music Center in Colchester, VT. She co-teaches an ECD class at the Wake Robin retirement community in Shelburne, VT. In addition, she has taught ECD (and in some cases, IFD) at various festivals, including NOMAD in New Haven, CT, NEFFA in Mansfield, MA, the Champlain Valley Folk Festival in Burlington, VT, and the Vermont International Festival in Essex Junction, VT. From 1990 to 2000, she and her husband Tom published "The Dance Gypsy", a monthly hardcopy newsletter/calendar for 600 subscribers. During that time, she also compiled "The Dance Gypsy's Annual Summer Planner", a booklet with information about dance camps and dance festivals held all over the United States.