

Foreword

Devising dances is always a joy, but publishing a book is..... (let your imagination fill in the blank). These dances began with a request from Jeannie Gilbert, chair of the Village Green English Country Dancers Thirtieth Anniversary Ball Committee. She asked if I would write three dances for the occasion. The theme for the Ball, 'Pearls of Wisdom', led to the idea of gates, which occurs in several of the dances. The act of creating these first three dances opened the 'gates' and the ideas just kept flowing. Within a few short months there was a substantial number of dances and in an unguarded moment I suggested that I could put them together in a volume. Once the idea had been verbalized, there was no turning back. I have been devising dances for many years, but for the first time I had an inclination to compose tunes to accompany them and I am excited to see them published. The two dances which I devised for the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration of our twin organization in Cheshire, England, the Hawk Green Hoedown Club are also included.

The Village Green English Country Dance group has been an important part of my life for the past thirty years. I have been involved as a teacher, dancer, musician and organizer. The teachers are a particularly creative group of dancers, both supportive and encouraging. Ideas are bountiful, energy is explosive and laughter is frequent. Thank you to all who have encouraged and supported me in publishing this volume, with particular thanks to Sue Stanton, Maureen McIntosh, Robin Lynch, Ginny Helmer, Jeannie Gilbert and Barrie Webster. As well, my thanks to all the members of the challenge class who so willingly spent their regular class time dancing through most of the dances in this volume. Thank you for your feedback and encouragement.

My thoughts frequently turn to John Trevenen and David Williams, co-founders of the Village Green English Country Dancers. I am thankful to them for their enthusiasm and knowledge of the dance and music as well as their willingness to share their love and expertise.

Finding just the right name for a dance is a much more difficult task than its creation. In my search I came across the following Old English Blessing:

“May your joys be as bright as the morning,
Your years of happiness as numerous as the stars in the heavens,
And your troubles but shadows that fade in the sunlight of love.”

I hope these dances add to your joys and years of happiness.

Elizabeth Goossen, March, 2007

August 2011 Second printing. **Note:** Stars in the Heavens has been replaced by the Stars in the Heavens as printed for this second printing.

November 2015 Third printing. There have been small changes to several dances and once more a major revision to “Stars in the Heavens”