

Is this for me? Yes, if you enjoy moving to music and dancing with a group of people -- or if you think you might. Come with or without a partner as we will change partners frequently. Adults and kids/teens 12 and older are welcome, but please leave younger children at home.

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

The beauty of ECD 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, dancers take hands to form circles, make stars, and turn other dancers. And the basic step is simple: walk in time to the music.

ECD is a form of traditional dance that dates back to Elizabethan times. In 1651, John Playford compiled the popular 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.cdney.org/wolfe.html for a New York Times article about ECD and Jane Austen.

The ECD repertoire is broad and includes dances from John Playford's book, from other 18th and 19th Century sources, and from many recently composed dances. Each dance has its own distinctive music, which may be a traditional tune, one composed specifically for the dance, or 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 weekend dance camps as well. There will also be a group that meets on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month (from September 17, 2010 through May 20, 2011) at the Elley-Long Music Center in Colchester, Vermont. See www.burlingtoncountrydancers.org for more information.

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). Sneakers are okay but are not recommended because they tend to stick to the floor. Please dress comfortable, perhaps with a removable layer since dancing can warm you up! Women may wear slacks, but skirts and dresses are fun to dance in and more "traditional".