

each set one of the many volunteers would explain the movements, with a minimum of demonstration, if deemed necessary, and then as the set was being danced a hint here and there to help dancers remember what came next. The calling was both helpful and valuable, but in no way was it intrusive. Bravo to all the callers. Christine Cabrera, Philippe Roudil, Brigitte Roussel, Elsebeth Ronne, Daniel Relet, Catherine Burban, Eric Daoudal, Jean Luc Bequignon and Alain Le Bihan all took their turn in calling one or more sets. OK the calling was in French, but don't worry, they used English terms that we all know, so the non- French speaker is not really at any disadvantage. I must pay tribute to Philippe Roudil in particular, I know that my French isn't great, but even I picked up the infectious humour of his explanations and calling.

On the Sunday morning after breakfast, you had the choice of trying some old step dances, with Elsebeth Ronne from Copenhagen, or joining in a singing session with Daniel Relet and Christine Cabrera. Elsebeth had good support, and as I have no singing voice I went, of course, to the singing session.



Great craic. Song sheets were provided and nobody felt less than totally welcome. We all joined in with some standard Irish songs like Molly Malone, the Irish Rover, and Dirty Old Town. We had a ball, so much so that it was decided we would provide the entertainment during aperitifs before the Sunday evening meal.

Sunday afternoon saw us back at the well attended set dancing workshops (10 + sets). Francoise Clemenceau, from Lorient, took us expertly through the Ballagh Half Plain Set. After that, despite putting my French to a severe test, I taught the new set, the Ardcar Set,(which you can now see on ouTube) which my friend Dany Richard and I had composed.



I am of course biased, but I was very gratified with the positive reactions to our new set. I was particularly pleased that a couple of teachers said that they would continue to raise its profile by teaching it to their classes. Then because of its inclusion in the evening ceili, Francoise Clemenceau gave us all a taster of the Camp Set and many profited from this session as could be seen from the number of sets who took to the floor to dance the Camp set at the ceili.

After our aperitifs and singing session, we had another great meal, and plenty of craic at the dinner tables, before the Sunday evening Ceili. Another interesting list of sets and more great music from Swallows Tail. We danced the Cashel, Clare Lancers, Moycullen, Corofin Plain Aran, West Kerry, Freres Nantais, Rinkinstown, Camp and Connemara again with helpful explanation and calling.

Another great night of dancing. The dancing of old sets like the Freres Nantais (Connemara Jig Set) showed the thoughtfulness of the organisers in keeping the old sets alive as well as introducing the new ones, like the Camp.

My overall impressions are typified by the fact that I want to come back next year. Why? Essentially to enjoy the company of many dedicated set dancers, to join in their fun, and to again benefit from being with such a welcoming group of people who went to so much trouble to ensure that everyone could enjoy a very successful event.

The next "Rencontres de Danse Irlandaise en Bretagne" will take place on 21 and 22 may 2016 at Lannion in the Côtes d'Armor" department. It will be organised by the association "Trégor Gaëlic" under the leadership of their President, Marie-Claude Carbonnel. I do hope to see you there.

A l'année prochaine.

Ashley Ray

Ardglass, Co. Down.